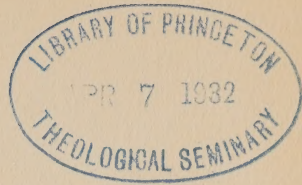


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A cordial and dispassionate
discussion on



A CORDIAL
And Dispassionate Discussion
ON
PREDESTINATION:
ITS SCRIPTURAL IMPORT.

BY
BISHOP JOHN B. SMALL, D. D.,

AUTHOR OF

"Practical and Exegetical Pulpit," "Code on Discipline" of
A. M. E. Zion Church, "Rosena," "Eumesa and Rosena,"
"The Human Heart Illustrated, &c."

WITH INTRODUCTION

By E. MOORE, Ph D., M. D.,

Professor Ancient Languages and Literature, Resident Physician,

Livingstone College,

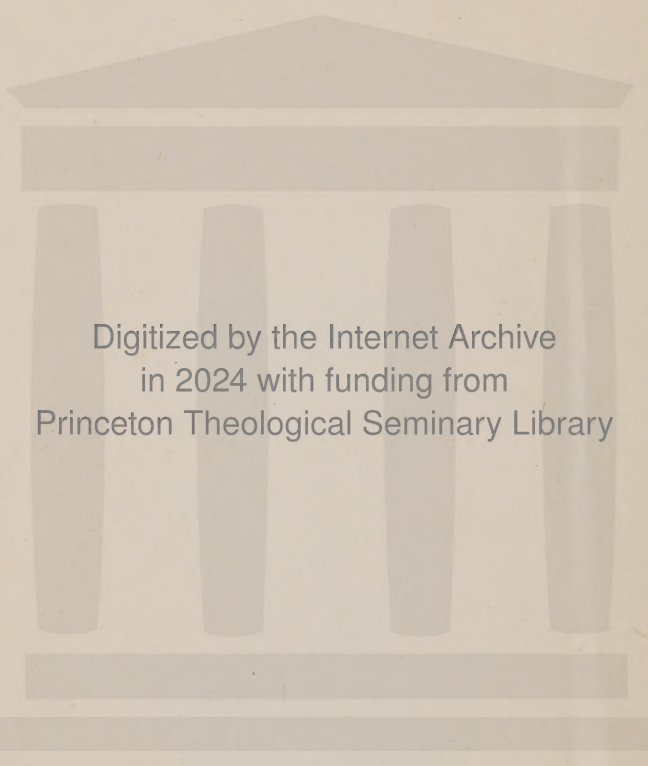
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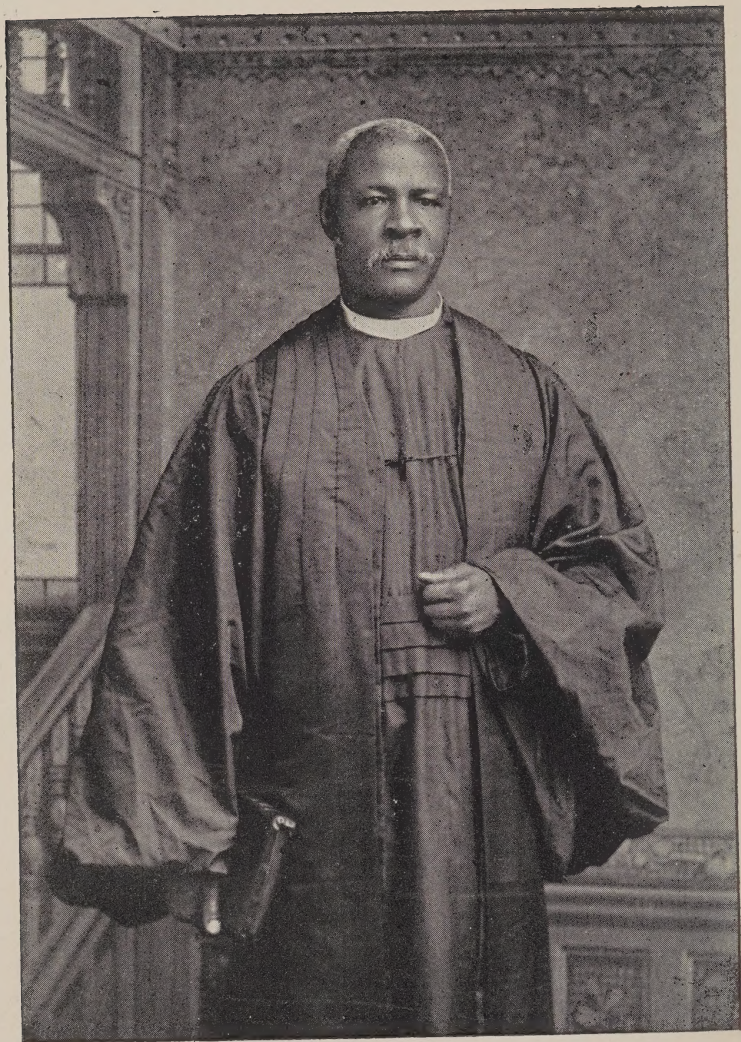
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BISHOP JOHN B. SMALL, D. D.

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INTRODUCTION.

From hours already crowded with a multiplicity of professional duties, I snatch a few minutes to write a short introduction to Predestination—Its True Import; by Bishop J. B. Small, A. M., D. D., of the A. M. E. Zion Church.

The name of Bishop Small is itself a guaranty of the soundness of logic and the excellence of the presentation of this, the latest production of his richly endowed and highly cultured mind.

In this book, the author discusses a Scriptural doctrine which has been the subject of a stubborn controversy for centuries. But to any that might at a mere glance of the subject turn away from the book without carefully and diligently reading the able and convincing arguments it contains, let me say he will miss an opportunity of improving heart and mind, which, when he comes to realize it fully, will be to him a cause for many regrets.

It is not a rehash of an old argument, but the Bishop, by learned, careful and laborious re-

search, brings to us an argument of surprising originality and freshness.

In anticipation of some inquiry as to when he found out this new view of predestination the author replies that he got this view by carefully reading the scriptures for many years; and in proof of his contention that salvation was fore-ordained or predestined in the person of Jesus Christ, he quotes appropriate passages of scripture; and the discussion of the points involved is not only interesting and eloquent but to any fair mind convincing, it seems to me.

In further argument of the point that Christ is the predestined source, the Bishop exhibits not only a thorough familiarity with the facts and doctrines of the divine writings, but a remarkable insight into their true import which seems to have been born of his reliance on God for the presence of the Holy Spirit to shed light on his truth.

The arguments of the advocates of predestination, [as it is commonly understood,] have never been satisfactory. The trouble with them, as is set forth in this book, is they confound God's foreknowledge with his acts. Kindred errors such as "Once in grace never out" and "What is

to be will be" are handled with ungloved hands as they deserve to be. The latter, that is "What is to be will be" has militated against the general progress of our people to an extent beyond the power of human estimate.

It has been the cause of laziness, shiftlessness, sloth, extravagance and poverty, it has been an instigation to drunkenness, disgrace, sickness and even death.

How any sensible persons could become the dupes of this offshoot of predestination as generally understood is difficult for us to understand; but that many have become its deluded victims we are too well aware. Therefore we are intensely and deeply interested in the wide circulation of this book among our people in order that they may diligently and prayerfully read and digest its wholesome and helpful truths.

We rejoice that we, in rapidly increasing numbers are already beginning to see more clearly some of the fallacies so detrimental to our progress. And the numerous, sensible, and practical illustrations with which the Bishop has interspersed his book will have a peculiar attraction for all interested in this progress of which the

individual, the church, and the world are so sadly in need.

Bishop Small is a man of learning: A man of an enviable amount of that good practical common sense in which too many of the molders of thought and character are woefully deficient; but above all he is a man of God, deeply yearning and arduously laboring for the triumph of light over darkness and truth over error.

This book is destined to do great good in enlightening our minds and hearts on a great and important, but intricate subject. It ought, therefore, to be in the hands of every intelligent layman, every theological student, and every clergyman.

Finally, we hail with gladness this rich production of the Bishop's fertile brain, and earnestly pray that on its mission in the home, the school, and the church, it may create broader and more liberal views, deepen religious convictions, and help in the production of grander and nobler specimens of Christian manhood and womanhood.

E. MOORE.

Livingstone College, Salisbury, N. C.,
May 11, 1901.

PREFACE.

We have always felt that more harm than good is the general result of controversy, therefore we have never been anxious to enter thereinto, notwithstanding we have often felt a desire to say this or that can not be so, for these reasons—

Predestination is a controversial doctrine, and we have no surety it will cease so to be for ages. Our reasons for writing the present treatise are, we have read the Bible through a goodly number of times, and the more we peruse the sacred pages of that Blessed Book, the more deeply we are impressed with its divine origin, its harmony, and its capability of explaining itself in all vital matters—matters relating to salvation. That though exponents do, they ought never to make it appear that the Bible contradicts itself, for it cannot: its divine insight is more than preventive in that direction.

As to its sacredness, when it does not explain itself, how cautious we should be in attempting an explanation; how exponents of God's word should labor—"Search the Scripture"—rather than

venture a doubtful interpretation. How matters entailing ambiguity should be weighed and studied in the light of other passages of Scripture, and divine aid earnestly and humbly implored, with a mind perfectly willing to yield, with thanksgiving, to divine instructions; before coming to a decided conclusion.

The careful perusal of the Holy Scripture, once a year, for the last thirty years has so deeply impressed us with the illimitability of God's goodness, tenderness, and mercies that we have had cause to write on the margin of our Bible special noticeable points; and became full to overflowing with God's extended mercies until the doctrine of Predestination passed before us in transformation scene—a divine panorama.

We then proposed to give to the public a careful review of the subject, under the caption: "Predestination—Its Scriptural Import"—as the Scripture presents it to us.

And may the Adorable Spirit shed light upon the well intended effort. Amen.

THE AUTHOR.

Predestination---Its True Import.

CHAPTER I.

SCRIPTURE PECULIARITIES.

There is something peculiar in Scriptural expressions, and to understand them, consistently, one must become thoroughly acquainted with the alphabet leading to its syllabication, pointings, and interpretation; and almost all confused Scriptural expressions derive from persons attempting to interpret before they are thoroughly acquainted with its alphabet and the simplicity of its spirituality.

That the Scripture may be consistently interpreted, it must be carefully and prayerfully read, frequently; and must not be interpreted according to men's thoughts, no matter how learned or experienced—though these qualifications are of inestimable value. The Scripture generally interprets itself, and when read in the light of the

Spirit pervading its expressions (the light spread by the Holy Spirit) the intents and purposes of its expressions are not hard to be discovered.

Passages which appear dark, and there is no attempt at interpretation by other passages, ought to be very cautiously dealt with; and in giving such passages personal views, it is wise to use the greatest care; and then to express them as views without the support of other passages of Scripture; especially when they admit ambiguity, or more than one meaning.

The Apostle Paul was very careful in this matter. He says—I. Corinthians 7: 6—"But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment." Again, verse 12: "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord." He further says, verse 25, "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." Here we have an example of the apostle's carefulness in expressing his deepest convictions, when he was conscious they were not divine utterances. This is so unlike many of us. We sometimes rush into matters of which we know but little, and which divine wisdom alone can establish, yet we are ready to wade to our necks to establish

our views—right or wrong. Sometimes we seem very careless in the way we handle divine things. We are ready to bend and twist passages to the end that they may be pleasing to our peculiar appetites. We seem to forget that Scripture has a peculiar way of interpreting Scripture, and this we will notice as we advance farther on.

SCRIPTURE INTERPRETS ITSELF.

It is not amazing to know how Scripture interprets itself, when it is read in the light of divine wisdom, compared with itself and other Scripture. We say with itself, forasmuch as we so often attempt to utilize the integument (the outward appearance) while the kernel escapes notice.

We think that fact has been the chief cause of the misinterpretation of predestination, and this (misinterpretation) has been carried to such an extent that those who think contrary to usual interpretation often attempt to discredit the doctrine itself. But predestination is a doctrine, presented by divine wisdom, in the light of the Holy Spirit, and therefore can not be made void by human imagination, no matter how much against his views. If the Scripture be read in connection with other Scripture, and the kernel

be sought instead of the integument, a great deal of misunderstanding will be obviated.

But, before we go farther, lest some individuals may think we are on the side of persons who think Scripture interpretation needs no learning—which can never be our thought—we will here give what was given to us for a true story, and which may assist in showing to advantage the faultiness of an exposition of the Holy Scripture where the comprehension of the individual is woefully wanting.

Some years ago, we pastored a church at Beaufort, North Carolina, and while there a white minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church North, related to us, in the presence of our wife, the following which he vouched to be a true story.

He stated that a white Baptist minister of the state of Virginia (we do not remember the special locality at present) who was a farmer as well as a preacher, because he did not believe in paying a preacher to preach the gospel, gave evidence of the reasonableness of his belief as follows: He believed the Lord commanded His Word to be preached free of charges, assumed the pastoral functions of the church in his neighborhood, and worked his farm for a living. One Sunday, go-

ing into his pulpit he declared it was not necessary to study in order to preach the Word of God, that the Lord commanded His servants to open their mouths and He would fill them. So saying, he opened the Bible to find a text, found Matthew 20: 30. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

Adjusting his spectacles, he said: "My brethren, it does not take no great learning to preach God's word"; so he began to read the text. "He—he—he—that—is—not—w-i-t-h—with—me—me—is—a-g-a-i-n-s-t—gin—gin—me,—and—he—he—he—that—g-a-t-h-e-r-e-t-h—gather—not—gather—not—w-i-t-h—with—me—me—s-c-a-t-t-e-r-e-t-h, scratcheth the board." In his exposition, he stated that the board referred to in the text was not soft pine board, but was hard knotty fat pine, that you will have to scratch if you are not gathered with the Lord."

It is true, this does not give the general trend or attempt at interpretation of the Scripture, yet it furnishes some idea how careless and unqualified individuals make attempts to interpret God's Holy Word; going about it without consistent thought, grace, and comprehension which a reasonable exposition or interpretation demands.

While vague and unreasonable interpretation may not accomplish the amount of evil which may be produced by a well poised and polished exposition, either, in its turn, does an amount of harm which may not be comprehended in this world, but may be to our discredit in the world to come.

No reasonable individual ought to try to produce flexibility in the Word of God, not intended by the Holy Spirit. Often our peculiar tenets cause us to dive into the bowels of the earth that we may gather pebbles; to climb the skies, that we may obtain some floating atoms, gather them and attempt to construct pyramids that our views may appear reasonable and conclusive. It is not a wise thing to practice contortion of the conscience, such as we often do to establish our views.

Thoughtlessness of the fact that one false premise does not merely lay the foundation for false views, but develops them—calls them forth. This is one of the practical troubles of life. Many practical and well developed falsifiers grow into that position by bending and twisting facts to suit purposes, forgetting that one false view demands another to prevent exposure; the second a

third, and so on indefinitely—until “Practice becomes perfect.”

The bender and twister of truth having produced pliancy, causes it to express itself to suit the occasion, and often adversely to its real intention. We often see this faculty developed in persons who are given to repartee—they are ready to twist any and everything to their advantage, right or wrong.

ILLUSTRATIONS—SCRIPTURE INTERPRETS ITSELF.

It is not an infrequent thing to hear cavilers say, Scripture contradicts itself; such statements are always incorrect; and in fact, rather applicable to the person making the statement. Sometimes this utterance is made from ignorance, and then with evil intention. In either case, the utterer sins grossly. If he is ignorant of facts, he ought not to judge wisdom until he is wise; if with evil intention, it is reasonable to know, he attempts to fight against the arm unconquerable; and though he (the evil designer) may abide for awhile, he and his evil designs are sure to fall. It is a divine declaration—Isaiah 54: 17—“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.”

The first of our illustrations which show that Scripture explains and verifies Scripture, will be found in the prediction against King Zedekiah. Let us listen to God's word in regard to him—Jeremiah 32: 4, 5—"Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans; but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes; and he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the Lord: though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper." This prophecy declares positively that Zedekiah shall be taken by the Chaldeans, placed in the hands of the king of Babylon, speak with him mouth to mouth, and see him eye to eye; and that Zedekiah should be led to Babylon and there remain until the Lord visited him; that is, the day of his death. Hear what Ezekiel says of the same prince—Ezekiel 12: 12, 13—"And the prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby: he shall cover his face, that he see not the ground with his eyes. My net also will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him

to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans ; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there."

From these declarations it will be seen that where one of the prophets presents the fact in a figure, the other expresses it clearly. Jeremiah expresses the fact that Zedekiah should remain in Babylon to the day of his death in this wise: "He shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the Lord." This is a figurative expression—"Until I visit him." Ezekiel says—Ezekiel 12: 13—"I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans ; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there."

It is clear to readers that Zedekiah lived in Babylon some time, and finally died there ; it therefore seems a contradiction to a critical observer who is ignorant of other Scripture relating to the same circumstance ; for it is supposed a person living in a place for some time is likely to have if no more than a passing glimpse of the place. Turning to Jeremiah—52: 9-11—the seeming contradiction is positively removed. We read: "Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath ; where he gave judgment upon him. And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes ; he slew also all the princes

of Judah in Riblah. Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death."

Speaking on this subject, Matthew Henry, the prince of commentators, has this to say: "'My net will I spread upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare.' It seemed to be the Chaldeans' net, and their snare, but God owns it for His. Those that think to outrun the sword of the Lord will find themselves taken in His net. Jeremiah said that King Zedekiah should see the king of Babylon, and that he should go to Babylon. Ezekiel saith he shall be brought to Babylon, yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there. Those that were disposed to cavil would perhaps object, that these two prophets contradict one another, for one said he should see the king of Babylon, the other said he should not see Babylon; yet both proved true. He did see the king of Babylon at Riblah, where he passed sentence upon him for his rebellion, but there he had his eyes put out, so he did not see Babylon when he was brought there."

THE KERNEL, NOT THE SHELL.

Before we enter upon the vital points surrounding and touching the doctrine of predestina-

tion, we desire to give another example, showing how easy it is to catch the integument or shell, while the real essence—the kernel—passes out of view; especially if the husk appears to assist in tying the Gordian knot we have in hand, to our satisfaction.

There are persons of learning and experience who can not see why the Apostle Paul and St. James do not contradict each other in the declaration of salvation by grace; and yet with careful consideration, it may be seen that these inspired writers scarcely touch the point being handled by the other. Let us see.

We will first quote from St. Paul, and it may be noticed he speaks generally of grace and works, with the evident intention of magnifying the freedom of salvation, through grace, by Jesus Christ. In this he is rather plain and brief. We read, Ephesians 2: 8, 9: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Almost all readers are acquainted with the fact that there has always been, is, and always will be a class of persons who think more of their good works than of the grace or free gift of God. The apostle in this passage, reasons with that class of individuals, that no work of

theirs brings them into favor with God, but His (God's) merciful free gift. There have been, are, and will ever be men like the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like other men; went on to tell of his good deeds, but nought of evil. The Apostle Paul magnifying the grace of God, expressed the fact that man is saved by the favor of God; not by works.

Looking for the contradiction, if there be any, we will freely quote from the epistle of James. Chapter 2, verse 14 reads: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" Verse 17 reads: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Verse 18: "Yea a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." Again, we quote verse 20: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" James continues to argue the subject; verses 21-22: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" We close the writer's argument by quoting the 24th and 26th verses—verse 24—"Ye see then how that by works a man is

justified, and not by faith only." Verse 26—"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

In the first place, the reader will note, the terms used by the two writers are entirely different. One uses the word "grace", and the other "faith"; and these words are not synonymous by any means. The terms are, grace and work, faith and work.

The theological definition of grace is, God's favor toward man; His mercy toward the transgressor, in lieu of His justice. The benefits His mercy imparts; divine love or pardon—a state of acceptance with God; enjoyment of the divine favor without deserving—GRACE.

Faith is another thing altogether. Its definition is, belief—belief of the truth of the fulness of Scripture narrative, and the supernatural origin of its propagations. Belief in the facts, and teachings, and truth of Scriptures, with practical love of them, with confidence and affectionate belief in the person and work of Jesus Christ, so that these affect the life and character of the believer.

Taking these two words and their varied definitions, it may be very easily seen that there is no declared contradiction in the words of the writers.

Paul says—Ephesians 2: 8, 9—that salvation is the favor of God, and not the works of man. James does not declare that salvation is of works. What he clearly says is, that faith can not be seen without works. That it is utterly impossible to show your faith without works. If an individual doubts your faith, you have no way of proving the falsity of his doubt but by works: thus the challenge—James 2: 18—“Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.” In the sequence, St. Paul is speaking of salvation, how it is obtained; St. James of the evidence of faith—what it is.

One says we are not saved by works, but by grace; the other declares, there can be no proof of faith without works. Are they not both right? Is there any contradiction in the declarations? Where is it?

These passages place before us how easy it is for persons to discover contradictions in the expressions of Scriptures of divine truth, when often the discovery is either from careless reading, unthoughtful conclusion, suggestive imagination, or void of the spirit and genius of Scripture interpretation. These are some of the obstructions to the plain exposition of the doctrine of predestination. In discussing questions persons often aim

high enough to miss the simple point germane to the subject.

It is our present intention and desire to show that the doctrine of predestination, being divinely given, is not so abstruse as it has been made to appear.

PREDESTINATION—DEFINITION.

One of our most distinguished lexicographers gives as the definition of this word—predestinate: To predetermine or foreordain; to appoint or order beforehand by an unchangeable purpose or decree; to pre-elect.

One of the unfortunate means used in interpreting Scripture is associating interpretations with theories. The theory of predestination and the doctrine of election were brought about by attempting to systematize the definition relative to the human and divine will, and thereby reconcile the phenomena of human freedom without infringing upon the divine omniscience.

In doing this, a doubt seems to insinuate itself into the complicated theory, whether or not the freedom of the will of man would not indicate greater freedom of the will of Omniscience; as it is with God to do as He please, and under obligation to none; therefore, He wills it, and it is rea-

sonable and right. Right of course; but here the fact seems to slip the tangent, viz.: whatever God decrees is right, but He will not decree what is unreasonable. If He decreed what predestination is often made to say He has, it is more than difficult for rational beings to conceive the reasonableness of a merciful and gracious Creator.

The unfortunate definition given to predestination, has occasioned no little unreasonable dispute to a doctrine divinely given. The doctrine has been made to say, that God from all eternity foreordained a portion of mankind to eternal bliss, and the remainder to eternal perdition; and whatever may be, there can be no change from that divine decree. These statements have raised armies in favor and against the doctrine, and no wonder.

From a careful investigation it will be found that the whole affair is based on theory—on the integument, and not on the kernel of divine Scripture.

In the early centuries the “irresistible grace” of the Holy Spirit, in the case of human salvation, was often warmly discussed; and so there arose a strong controversy between Pelagius and Augustine. Pelagius’ views in this relation were, that the decree of foreordination was subordinate to

the divine foreknowledge of human character. Augustine maintained the absolute decree of God, independent of all considerations.

Pelagius argued, that God foreordained the destiny of man by the thorough foreknowledge of the intent of his purpose and character. Augustine, that God as God, made His assignment independent of all consideration. These arguments were taken up later by Arminius and Wesley on the side of Pelagius, and Calvin and others on the side of Augustine; hence, predestination is called "Calvinism"; and is understood to be, God will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy, according to His foreordained plans from eternity; and will harden whom He will in like manner, according to His foreordained plans. That some men come into the world doomed to eternal destruction, while others were born to be saved—that there can be no chance for a reversal of those decisions. This is especially the definition given by the less informed.

It is our desire to discuss this matter freely and dispassionately, and as far as possible to give credence to all Scripture declarations for or against the doctrine, as it is understood.

CHAPTER II.

SCRIPTURAL VIEW OF PREDESTINATION.

Adding to or taking from Holy Scripture is a dangerous undertaking, and a thoughtful and conscientious mind shivers in such an attempt. It is possible, however, to do this very thing unconsciously; and since sin is sin, and must be forgiven or punished, one is not less guilty in so doing—that is, adding to or taking from Holy Scripture—though it be done unconsciously. The palliating circumstance may ingratiate the plea of extenuation, where presumptuous sins provoke retribution. For this good reason sin unconsciously committed is punishable, for if the transgressor were careful in avoiding minor commissions, greater sins would scarcely be committed.

If individuals would pay due reverence to the sacred Word of God, flagrant violations would not be so frequent. If persons handling the Word of God would regard it as such, they

would go about it so cautiously that the spirit of reverence would invoke the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and He (the Spirit) would lead them into all truths; thus the terrible mistakes so often made would be avoided. Under the guidance of the Spirit no mistake can be made—He errs not.

On account of the careless and irreverent way we often approach the Word of God, there is no wonder we are not successful in obtaining the guidance of the Adorable Spirit; hence, the innumerable blunders, and so often putting the cart before the horse.

That we may bring before our readers facts in the light of the Divine Spirit, we ask His aid in handling His utterances; and so we quote, first, the strongest passage declaring the doctrine of predestination: it is Romans 8: 29, 30—"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Referring to the argument between Pelagius and Augustine, the former used his best endeavor to show that the election which followed predestination—which of necessity, according to the na-

ture of things, must precede it—was the result of God's perfect knowledge. That God knowing perfectly well the course each individual would follow during his existence, knowing this from all eternity, permitted Him, justly, to set His seal to man's ultimate destination. In fact, there is no past nor future with God.

We dare say, Pelagius erred when he vindicated the possibility of good in human nature—in itself; and, therefore, we agree with Augustine who held that apart from the influence of divine grace, or favor of God, there is no good in human nature. If there is good in human nature, aside from the divine influence (since good can not be destroyed with evil) there would be a possibility of man being saved without the Atonement: this we know is impossible.

But, remember, even this total depravity does not destroy the will, when it is brought in contact with the divine influence. Man's will being absolutely free, he may or may not accept the offers of God. Anything less would destroy his responsibility in equity.

However, Pelagius held this agreeable doctrine, though he (Pelagius) seemed to err in relation to the possible good in human nature aside from the divine influence. He held that the choice of

salvation lay in man's will. Augustine denied that man's will had any active freedom or power of choice since the Fall.

From the varied views of these eminent men, it may be discerned how easy it is (if these learned fathers slipped the track one after the other) to wander farther and farther away. Augustine seemed to indulge in a more distant excursion than his fellow, yet it is evidenced he did it reverencing his conception. Pelagius slipped the track but soon returned, while Augustine argued not merely that it is in the power of God to leave an individual to himself when he sins against the drawing influence, but because he is not in the selection of God, He (God) causelessly leaves him in that condition, knowing that he can do nothing unless He draws him, and consigns him to destruction because he does not do what he can not do; will call him to judgment, judge him righteously, and consign him to eternal torment because he did not do what God knew he could not do. These are not the words of Augustine, but the end of his argument. Then, he presents to us the character of God as a merciful, just, and benevolent Father.

Nobody has a right to say what God should do, nor what He ought to do; but according to His

revelation of Himself, we know somewhat what He will not do—He will not do an injustice to any creature, for it is against His nature.

What would it be, if I had been consigned to heaven and happiness from all eternity, no matter what I may do; and you to eternal torment, notwithstanding you have done nothing to justify the assignment? Any reasonable man or woman knows this can not be the character nor work of our benevolent and merciful God.

But let us go to the Scripture—"For whom he did foreknow." The very first sentence shows that the act performed was in accordance with perfect knowledge. We call attention to the fact, that when we speak of foreknowledge, applying such to God, we speak after the manner of men. God does not foreknow anything. Foreknowledge is applicable to finite beings alone—not to the Infinite. To Him all things from eternity to eternity are very present.

But it is definitely stated in the Scripture of divine truth, that the act which followed, in the way of declaration, proceeded from His foreknowledge—"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate." This ought to be a sufficient for all to understand that the limit of justice was exercised, and such justice as He alone is capable of

exercising. He acted according to His knowledge, not according to what may be, but what He *knew* would be.

ELECTION.

The apostle used the word "called" in verse 30 for election. But when it is considered that election must precede predestination, notwithstanding the Scripture gives it in a reversed relation, our attention is carefully called to cautious dealing.

Persons must be selected (or elected) before they can be destined. The universe is called to attention, and every creature, good and evil, is placed before the illimitable comprehension of Deity. The acts of every individual from birth to death are placed in the scales of divine judgment: He sees and knows. What is there to hinder Him from knowing who will yield to the wooings and strivings of the divine Spirit and who will resist? In such a case what can there be to the disadvantage of any individual, if it is really what he will be and nothing else: all based upon his refusing to accept divine aid and to be saved from eternal destruction? Under such circumstances, would the individual be wronged, if through the perfect knowledge of God his des-

tiny be fixed? God knows as well from eternity who will yield to His saving grace as it is possible for Him to know at the Day of Judgment; why must He desist from making provision according to the fitness of things? It must be remembered, God is the Eternal God, and whatever is done by Him bears the imprint of eternity. His name is eternal, His words are eternal, His commands eternal, His views eternal, His wisdom eternal, His might eternal, His purposes eternal, His tenderness eternal, His wrath eternal, His decision eternal, and of course His consignment is eternal.

God's election, according to His perfect knowledge, can work no wrong to any individual, if it be given and taken with the right view. Taking this plain and practical view of the matter, individuals elect themselves according to choice, and God seals the election. They choose God, His goodness and mercy, and He elects them—"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called."

PREDESTINATION.

Destine means to locate—to fix at a certain place; hence, predestination simply means, to lo-

cate beforehand. Commonly speaking, to select your place before you get there, or before you are ready for it. That is exactly what predestination means.

Theologically speaking, it means, that God, according to His perfect knowledge, selected and keeps in reserve a place for each individual, as He knows will be his ultimate destiny. There can be nothing unreasonable in so doing, neither can it so appear, when it is reasonably understood.

Predestination is a reasonable doctrine which has been practiced by monarchs, nobles, and peasants. Monarchs often will their throne and belongings to their unborn children, and the same (throne excepted) may be said of all classes and conditions of men. There can be nothing wrong in predestination, when it is truly and rightly understood.

THE NATURE OF SCRIPTURAL PREDESTINATION.

We think nearly all of the disagreement and discussion will be obviated, if the central point of Scriptural predestination be recognized; and that may be seen in almost every passage of Scripture in which the doctrine is presented. It is this: "To be conformed to the image of his Son."

We have been arguing that there can be no difficulty in accepting the Scriptural doctrine of predestination, as God knows all individuals from eternity, His act, therefore, in assigning man accordingly can not injure his case, neither can it benefit him: here is the central ground of this glorious doctrine. God knowing beforehand the state and condition of man, by the Fall, predestinated the only way of his escape; placed it in the image from which he fell; "To be conformed to the image of his Son." Glorious predestination, and many other passages of Scripture will bear us out.

It is a very easy thing to conceive that when man fell he lost the image of God, in which he was created; for the Scripture declares—Genesis 1:27—"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Having lost the image in which he was created, God predestinated that the only way by which he may reach his lost estate is, by conforming to the image of His Son. In this there can be no complicated nor theoretical view in the matter. Let us read the Scripture, and it says plainly that this predestination is to be conformed to the image of His Son. Here it is: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predes-

minate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

OTHER SCRIPTURE ON PREDESTINATION.

In advancing what may be supposed to be strange views on a subject of this kind, some may ask, when did you find out this new view of predestination? We reply, We have been searching the Bible constantly for years, and any person may examine the volume of God's Holy Word which we have carefully perused, and he will find these passages, as well as others, marked in the margin or superscribed at the top of the page. To us, this is no new version—we have preached sermons thereon.

It is no new discovery that the subject, salvation, was foreordained or predestinated in the person of Jesus Christ, from the following passages which give striking evidences of this vivid truth. We quote I. Corinthians 2: 6-8—"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the

princes of this world knew : for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

In this passage, Christ is represented as the ordained plan of salvation, and is continually spoken of as a mystery. Here it is plainly stated that He is the ordained medium of salvation, and notwithstanding this truth is expressly spoken of as wisdom hidden in a mystery—hidden from the princes of this world—it is given to the church as a revelation. It is also expressed that on account of this mystery being hidden in a mystery, the design of Providence was carried out by the enemies of truth, according to the foreordained plan of God—they "Crucified the Lord of glory." Hence, it is stated that Christ—"The Lord of glory"—is the ordained or predestined Source of salvation, laid according to divine plan, and ignorantly executed by wicked hands.

Standing in a reflective mood, from the side of the mount we gaze upon Christ upon the cross. We behold Him agonizing in the pangs of death, but we see no purple flood to obliterate the indelible marks of sin. Lurid clouds hang over the earth like a pall, obstructing every ray of sunlight! We see the Prince of Peace approaching death! The prince of this world suggests a way

to increase His pain—add to His agonizing sufferings! “Pierce His side.” The soldier, pointed spear in hand, advanced, and with it pierced His side, and out bursts the purple flood! The poet sings:

“The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day.”

ETERNAL PURPOSE.

St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, speaks of predestination under the appellation of “eternal purpose;” and this (eternal purpose) is applicable to the salvation of men, and is here located in Jesus Christ. That we may obtain the intent and purpose of the apostle, we will quote the ninth and tenth verses in connection with the eleventh—Ephesians 3: 9-11—“To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Here the apostle plainly and positively declares that the “mystery” (man’s redemption from the

Fall) which had been hid in God from the creation of the world, in that the creation was performed by Christ Himself, was hid from the prince of this world; to the intent that the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, who predestinated the salvation of man in Christ Jesus. Using the very words of the apostle, he says: "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Here, again, predestination or the eternal purpose of God is laid in Jesus Christ, and these are not the end of Scriptural declarations on this point. Peter, though a little less explicit, makes similar statement—I. Peter 5: 10—"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

All evangelical readers and believers place the salvation of man in the sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ, but it will be noticed that Peter expresses the eternal purpose of God, in His (God's) calling us—"Hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." Paul says—Romans 8: 30—"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he

also called"; so it is easily seen that Peter speaks of predestination, saying: "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." Here the Apostle Peter puts in His declaration, that the eternal purpose of the call is through Christ Jesus; and Paul expressly declares—I. Corinthians 3: 11—"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And again, Ephesians 2: 19, 20—"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."

We do not wish to force nor beg the question, therefore let us come to declarations which are not only pointed but undeniable.

CHRIST THE CENTRAL FIGURE.

There are very few passages of Scripture to be found in the Bible unsupported by other Scriptures—this is not realized by everybody. This discovery can only be made by constant and thoughtful perusal of the sacred volume, and is one of the greatest evidences of the inspiration of Holy Scripture; for though the texts are not given in the same words, one supports another; and

gives proofs that the writers did not copy the words of each other, but the spirit of inspiration furnished them with matter which vindicated the truths spoken by other writers.

We turn to Paul's letter to the Ephesians for the keynote of the decision of this important doctrine. Not the doctrine of predestination alone, but its ultimatum. Here we refer to Ephesians 1: 5-12, it reads: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of time he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we

should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."

It seems to us, the first verse quoted (verse 5) places the matter as clearly as it is needed to be declared. Paul putting himself among the select ones, says: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." In this the apostle positively declares, in the spirit of inspiration (aside from his former strong statement that other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ) that the strength of the doctrine of predestination is human salvation by Jesus Christ, and that this does not merely run through, but the doctrine is absorbed therein—in Jesus Christ. It will be noticed wherever predestination is mentioned or indicated, Jesus Christ is made the Source or Foundation, as He is in deed and in truth.

THINGS TO BE NOTED.

It is an interesting thing to notice in every place where predestination is mentioned or clearly referred in Scripture, it will be seen that one or both of two things are mentioned. They are "Jesus Christ" and "mystery". We will first quote passages in which Jesus Christ is men-

tioned, then, Christ and mystery and will try to discover their applicability. Romans 8: 29—"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son"; and again, I. Peter 6-10—"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, etc."

The declaration of Peter is an inference, but that of Paul to the Romans gives the plain and positive fact that Christ is the door of predestination. Here are the passages in which "Christ" and "mystery" are mentioned in connection with predestination. I. Corinthians 2: 6-8. "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." We quote again Ephesians 1: 5-12. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace,

wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." And again, Ephesians 3: 9-11—"To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." These last quotations present Christ and mystery in the foreordained plan of God, termed predestination.

Now, we desire to look at these quotations more carefully and concisely, and so consider :

CHRIST THE PREDESTINATED SOURCE.

Repetitions are not very acceptable things in themselves, but they are in the Holy Scripture. The more you repeat divine Scripture, the brighter the light of reason shines upon it, and upon the mind of the individual repeating it.

We have repeated Scripture again and again before the divine light struck our mental vision ; then, like Archimedes, the mathematician of Syracuse, we have had occasions to exclaim : “We see it, we see it !”

Let us again refer to the passages dealing with predestination, and see the important part attributed to Jesus Christ—and may the Holy Spirit shed His divine light and enable us to discern the truth ; that we may see that Christ is the Source of predestination : that He is the predestined way to salvation, as He is the end and conclusion of all truths. We listen to St. Paul in the Spirit speaking of God thus : “For whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” In this we have the truth clearly stated. God determined that the saved must conform, or more Scripturally expressed,

must be conformed—subject themselves to be conformed to the image of His Son. That He knew who would submit themselves to the divine provision, and presented to the world His plan which He had predetermined or foreordained to meet demands—“to be conformed to the image of His Son.” The door—the only door of admission into His glorious presence: “To be conformed to the image of His Son.”

But He teaches us more. He would have us know that this plan has been a mystery. To restore man to his former image demanded a divine effort which involved a mystery, not merely to the world, but which mystified the prince of this world.

This fact is verified in the language of St. Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians—I. Corinthians 2: 6-8—“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the prince of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

Here we see the ordained plan is the redemption of the world which was so hid in Christ that

though it was spoken of, remained a mystery. A mystery! not to the ignorant, but to the princes of this world; yes, a mystery to the prince of darkness, and we doubt not a mystery to the angels of light; which thing they desired to look into.

Here was the mystery. Satan succeeded in corrupting—as he supposed—the very fountain head; knowing that no clean thing could be obtained from an unclean: none but God could see the way out. But, blessed be His gracious and glorious name, Jehovah devised a plan. This plan could not be discerned, since Jesus was the predestined way which was to all a mystery. Paul so saw it, declared—I. Timothy 3: 16—“Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

We may notice that the apostle speaks of Christ as the beginning and the end of predestination. Let us refer again to his epistle to the Ephesians—I: 5-12—“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, etc.” But, lest we should be mistaken, as others have been, in this great mystery, the apostle closes the argument by saying: “That we should

be to the praise of his glory, *who first trusted in Christ.*"

To the Ephesian brethren, the apostle declares : "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Since predestination and foreordination are synonymous terms, for expressive reading, let us substitute foreordination for predestination, or more explicit, foreordained for predestinated ; let us read it accordingly. Having foreordained us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. Let us study carefully this last rendering and understand what it says and what it means. It says and consistently means—referring to our having lost the image of God by the Fall—God has planned, according to knowledge, that we return to Him by regaining or recovering our lost image in the person of Jesus Christ. That this is the eternal plan—the recovery of the lost image in which we were created, there can be not the shadow of a doubt ; and that the plan eternally arranged was our adoption by Jesus Christ, Scripture so declares ; and all reasonable individuals must admit.

The trouble has been and is, persons look at

the word predestination in the verse without thinking of its meaning ; and having fixed in their minds what it intends to convey, relinquish other concerns and considerations. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ"—having foreordained us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ—sound differently, yet mean the same thing ; notwithstanding, putting the expression in the latter form shows more plainly what is intended : Christ is the end of the plan. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by Him. God so determined from all eternity.

THE OBJECT OF REVELATION.

The object of the revelation of God's plan is presented by the apostle in these words : "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace." Universal praise, no doubt, is here intended, and ought to be rendered to God for His goodness to all mankind, in giving His Son to die for the salvation of the world. Praises are due, and ought to be rendered to Him for the gift and revelation of the Source—the single Source of redemption. Not a dozen, nor three,

nor two ways, but one—only one—predestined way of salvation, and that way not our way, but God's: praise His holy name. Let us notice:

First—That the way predestination has been interpreted, when adhered to, makes it impossible to give universal praise for the blessings of salvation, no matter how well may be the intention of the interpreters.

Good men have considerable control of themselves, but they have not completely lost all selfishness. Even in the case of Christian perfection, which may be wisely termed full or perfect salvation, there may be found a vein of selfishness running through one's nature. He is not willing to do to others at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances as he would have them do to him. If he thinks so, a trial which goes against his nature will convince him.

Some of these good men who feel they are perfectly saved tell us, and want us to agree with them; that God in His goodness saved them by a plan of His own, and by that same plan, determined the condemnation of untold millions without refusal to accept His salvation or by any fault of their own—nothing but God's predestined will. They must not be saved because He is God and wills it;

and, as a righteous God, having eternal power He does not call their will into question, but condemns them because of His superior and eternal will. They are condemned because He has the power to condemn them; then, He calls upon all creatures to praise the excellency of His work.

To some, such reasoning might be reasonable, because their intention is to reverence God's eternal will and power. As to reverencing the will, might, love, tenderness, wisdom, and all of His attributes we feel that is our highest aim in life, and that instills in us reason—it does not destroy that faculty. For our part, we do not see how universal praise could be rendered under such conditions. To claim universal praise for making it possible for salvation of part of the world, would contradict the term universal; and no person of reason will doubt that universal praises and thanksgivings are God's.

Praise and thanksgiving could be due, for His saving a part of the world, providing that was the limit of His power; but God does nothing by limitation. When any man says that God made provision for the salvation of a part of the world—and he says it when he represents predestination as the intention of God to save part of the world—he misrepresents the Eternal One. God

never works in that way, because it is not in accordance with the illimitability of His divine power. When anything is done that may be considered partially done (and to make provision for the salvation of part of the world would be partially done) it is entirely out of the realm of divine operation.

Then, we can scarcely see how divine mercy could make provision for and seal one part of the human family for bliss eternal, determine and consign the other part for eternal destruction.

Think of obtaining from me praise and thanksgiving when I am conscious that my father, mother, children, wife, etc., have been consigned to eternal torment for no other reason than power to determine—not of themselves. No refusal of mercy on their part, no neglect of privilege, no scorn of tender mercies, no bolting the door of their hearts against divine entreaties; they stood ready to admit light from any source, but the only power that is determined that His will was to consign them to eternal torment, without offence. Is it reasonable to suppose that I would be exultantly ready to praise and adore the hand which performed such work? That is not reasonable.

In such cases, that we may praise and extol the goodness of God, our comprehension of right and

wrong, of reasonableness and unreasonableness, of justice and injustice must be changed. With the comprehension of our present knowledge, imperfect as it is, such conception would never invoke universal praise, and we doubt that it would if our knowledge were made perfect, unless the advancement caused the channel to flow adversely.

It is certain, so harmonious are the arrangements of the finger of God's providence that the verbrating elements in concord sing His praises, while the children of intelligence shout for joy. God's mercies, love, long-suffering, gentleness, justice, and wisdom evoke perfect laudation: these must be seen in the way of wisdom.

Secondly—Such manifest goodness of God's grace, in dealing with a cause even in wisdom must exhibit His universal goodness and mercy in harmonizing sentiment of justice to the praise and glory of the Almighty: otherwise it would be transformed into sympathy for the unfortunate, who without the exercise of their will, aside from their want, against their endeavor (or they were not given the chance to use their endeavor) have been consigned to the pit of destruction. It does not seem that any reasonable creature would seek to discover the unlimited power and will of God

so strongly as to limit His mercy to such an extent that it partook of the appearance of injustice. God is too merciful and kind to have His acts bear such an interpretation—notwithstanding He is under obligation to no individual.

Thirdly—The way predestination has been presented, it encourages deluded persons to continue in their delusion. They say, if I am elected to eternal life and blessedness, nothing I can do will alter the situation; and no one could doubt the assertion, if it were a fact. Others may say, if I have been left out of the plan of salvation, nothing I can do will draw me nearer, and such an explanation of the matter seems reasonable. Under such circumstances, what reason and encouragement would there be for striving to enter in at the strait gate? What shall be done with the passage which demands—Luke 13: 24—“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able”? This is a very striking passage of Scripture. The Greek has it: “Agonize to enter in at the strait gate.” Agonize is a very strong word to mean nothing. Almost anybody knows what is implied by agony—agonize.

The reader will excuse our reference to the Greek, for he who talks most about Greek and

Hebrew knows least, and sometimes nothing. Once we sat on the platform behind the pulpit and heard a preacher attempt to re-translate the Old and New Testament in his sermon, and we were sure if a Hebrew sentence were placed before him, he would not know whether or not it was upside down. We learned quite a lesson on the occasion. It seems he who knows least talks most. But, to our subject.

Why should we cease to strive to enter in at the strait gate, when we are not merely commanded so to do, but are assured that our salvation hangs on our success in entering; and our success on our constant striving? Why should the command be given, if there be no necessity therefor? and there can be no necessity unless our success in entering depends on our striving.

Argument to contrary reminds us so much of a person telling a story or falsehood with the hope of ending the matter, when to his surprise, his statement is called in question, and he is compelled to double, treble, and sometimes quadruple the falsification. The false statement would not have been made, if the individual saw to what it would lead; but finding himself on the track was compelled to strive for the mastery.

The answers are various to the question, Why should we strive for that we already have? It is useless to discuss that point—nothing is gained thereby. If predestination means that certain individuals have been sealed from eternity for eternal bliss, at the option of Eternal Power, that is done, and can not be undone; what is the idea of ministers preaching the gospel, begging and praying sinners to be reconciled to God through Christ, offering earnest prayer that they may be brought to the knowledge of the truth and accept the terms of salvation, knowing at the same time that they have been sealed and must be saved according to the foreordained plan of Deity, and they have no will in the matter? To say the least, such seems superfluous. To urge a man to come to Christ when it is known it is impossible for him to do so or if it is possible he is bound to come, seems to be doing for the sake of doing. Take it for granted, without argument, that the Gospel must be preached and salvation presented as a form, or to carry out a purpose—probably a divine purpose—why urge so earnestly every man, woman, or child to come to Christ without delay, with the startling statement that delay is dangerous? What danger can there be for a person whose destiny is sealed for eternal bliss or misery?

It is known when a magnet is placed within reach of any object containing its inherent qualities, nothing prevents it from adhering thereto. Persons having no will as to their choice of salvation—as some predestinarians inform us—what causes the delay of the select ones? The very fact that the Gospel has been preached to all men—“To every creature”;—implies that salvation is urged upon all; rich and poor, high and low, noble and ignoble, learned and unlearned. The Gospel offers equal chances to all men to accept or reject salvation: if not, it is worse than mimicry or mockery. Is it not worse than mimicry to place colors before a man who never saw light and never will?

If a man is offered salvation, has it in his power to accept, but using his will rejects; he being a moral agent, is responsible. The fact that he has power to accept or reject, that he chose to reject—though God needs no justification before men nor angels—this free will act of man, justifies God's goodness in His offered mercy to His universal praise and glory, and places the guilt and condemnation upon man for refusing to accept God's remedy to relieve him of his infirmities.

Take it for granted, God is under no obligation

to any individual or individuals, in heaven above, on earth beneath, nor under the earth—but will the Judge of all the earth not do right?

PHARAOH AN EXAMPLE.

But there are those who tell us that God's dealing with Pharaoh, as declared by Scripture, is a sample of His universal dealing with the children of men. We do not doubt, but let us see.

Some would have us believe that predestination means, God blessing a part of mankind with abundance of free salvation, because of the power of His unlimited will; and in like manner He curses the remainder for no other cause than the independence of His will; and bring up the case of Pharaoh as an example. We believe Pharaoh is an excellent example. We have not time nor space to study his character, but for a short time we will see what there is in his case to assist in twisting the doctrine of predestination to attribute to God what Balak attributed to Balaam—Numbers 22:6—"Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed."

It is true the curse of God often rests upon men, but God does not curse men. He lays His curses upon forbidden paths, and men going into those paths assume the burden. Deuteronomy 27: 15 declares—"Cursed be the man that maketh any graven image or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsmen, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen." The man who disobeys the injunctions curses himself: the curse is placed upon the commission of the offense.

Persons who interpret predestination to mean God's favor to a part of mankind, and condemnation to the remainder, for no other cause than His unlimited will, conclude they have an excellent object lesson in what the Scripture says of Pharaoh. We will therefore make the quotations and examine them. Our first quotation is Exodus 4: 21—"And the Lord said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, and he shall not let the people go." The next passage is, Exodus 10: 1—"And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his

heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him."

It will be noticed the first passage declares the intention of God: "I will harden his heart"; and the next an attestation of the fact: "I have hardened his heart."

It must be remembered that Scriptural declarations are truths presented to meet the understanding of the ages. For example, the Scripture declares—Joshua 10: 13—"The sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." Without further quotations we see clearly that Scripture speaks to meet the comprehension of the ages; for the standing still of the sun would not prevent the rushing on of the shade of evening; yet the figurative expression of Scripture (as it was) was true; for the sun did not remove from view: did not appear to move as usual.

We know now that the movement of the earth causes the sun to sink behind the western hills, and that stopping the revolution of the earth retarded the apparent course of the sun; yet it was true, the light of the sun kept its position, and the people who then so understood the movement of the sun, realized that "the sun stood still."

Then, you see, it takes reason to understand the

Scripture correctly, and especially in matters of the kind.

HARDENS PHARAOH'S HEART.

What is understood by hardening Pharaoh's heart? In giving attention to this question, we have occasion to note that no book so abounds in figurative expressions as the Bible. Jesus Himself generally spoke in parables. A parable is a figure used to express or illustrate a practical idea—to exhibit a moral.

While it is true God can do whatever is pleasing in His sight, He works according to methods. When He speaks of hardening Pharaoh's heart, the expression is figurative—the figure known as metonymy, which puts the cause for the effect, or the effect for the cause. Here the cause is put for the effect. No person will doubt that naturally hardening the heart means immediate death. "I have hardened his heart", is a figure in two ways. First, stubbornness is put for hardening the heart; and, secondly, the cause is put for the effect.

We said, the natural hardening of the heart would produce immediate death; therefore, stubbornness or unyielding will was intended.

It is evident that man's natural disposition is

hardness of heart, or stubbornness of will in relation to his obedience to the will of his Maker. Disobedience, and not obedience, is his inclination; when he is found in obedience it is through the coercive influence of the divine Spirit. The Spirit strives with all individuals, but He is not heeded by some.

When God will have a plan accomplished, He forces the will of any individual to the accomplishment of His intention, but such force can have no effect for nor against the individual. God's divine influence is His, and no one has any claim thereon. He may offer it to us or He may withhold it, and do either in righteousness; but since man's salvation is based upon the right exercise of his free will, God invariably offers him the influence of His divine guidance. He may accept or reject.

In rejecting divine guidance, he may do so but once, under peculiar circumstances; and that once he may seal his eternal condemnation. Again, he may reject it thousands of times. He must reject it, if it is but once, to justify the mercies of God in turning away from him. David indicated this fact when he said—Psalms 51: 4—“Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justi-

fied when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."

While God needs no justification from creatures, yet His works are so perfect in their relation, that they and all that behold them bear testimony of their justification.

Whenever an individual rejects the offered mercies of God, he justifies the forfeiture thereof; the offer may be renewed millions of times, and it may never. His rejection justifies the actions of God, though but once. To some God renews His offers times innumerable: to others, never! Herein He is merciful to whom He will be merciful, "And whom he will he hardeneth." This does not appear to have anything to do with predestination. Is God not justified when He refuses to have His Spirit insulted continually by one who did it or makes a practice of so doing? It is withholding His insulted Spirit which is termed "hardeneth", forasmuch as no one can come to God—since the Fall—unless He draws him. When He refuses the aid of His Spirit, the individual is "harden-ed". Read the Scripture history of Pharaoh, and see whether or not he had done despite to the Spirit of God.

Think of Pharaoh slaying all the male child-

ren of the people of God; think of his reply to Moses, when that prophet took him a message from the mouth of God—Exodus 5: 2—“Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” It is truly said, but not rightly understood, God shows mercy to whom He will show mercy. That is, He extends His mercies to some for scores of years; to others it may be but for a day—the day of his accountability.

This is no evidence that God does not show mercy to all His creatures, for evidently He does; but He does not extend it to all alike. That is at the pleasure of His will, and there is no unreasonableness thereabout.

The terrible mistake made by many is, that a part of mankind has been debarred from the favor of God from eternity, and they bring up the Scripture declaration of Pharaoh as an example. They quote Scripture to prove that God created Pharaoh for destruction. It seems to us that common reason would contradict such an idea, and that would induce any person to read the Scripture under the focus of divine light. The Scripture quoted is Exodus 9: 16—“And in very deed for this cause I have raised thee up, for to

show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth."

We will not speak to our readers of the word rendered "raise thee up," nor refer them to commentators; but to the marginal reference of the Bible. There it will be seen that the true translation of the word rendered "raise thee up" is, "made thee stand"; and the reference made to it in Romans 9: 17 has, in the original, a word which agrees with the Old Testament Scripture. It means—roused, stirred up, keep awake. That is, prevent him from falling.

By giving attention it will be seen that the idea presented is, "For this cause have I kept thee from falling ere this", that My power may be seen, and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth. Unfortunately, some misunderstanding this passage—Exodus 9: 16—interpret it: For the purpose of destroying thee, I have raised thee up, that the universe may know I am the God of unlimited power: I do as I please. I raise up one man for heaven, and another for destruction to suit My purpose. In relation to this rendering, we can only quote Abraham's expression in his appeal to God for Lot before the destruction of Sodom—Genesis

18: 25—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

PHARAOH SOWED AND REAPED.

The idea of sowing and reaping occurs to the minds of persons occasionally, but does not always make the needed impression. It is not a mere declaration, but a positive fact. It is true in the spiritual as well as the vegetable world. Whatever you sow you are bound to reap, yet reaping it seldom comes to our minds, we are reaping what we sowed.

Using the expression God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and destroyed him because he did not obey Him, baffles the conception of many; and only the reverential do not question the act because they know God can not err, and will invariably do right. Yet, they can scarcely see into the matter.

Having discussed the matter of heart hardening, and having shown that it is merely withdrawing the insulted Spirit, and in some cases after He has been abused thousands of times, we desire to look at another point in connection with withdrawing the divine Spirit, and requiring obedience.

The like was done by Pharaoh himself toward

the Israelites, and it seems the same dish is given him to try his appetite. Let us read Exodus 5:7, 8—"Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God."

Here you see Pharaoh increased the tale of bricks, took away the straw, and demanded the work to be done as heretofore. God deals with him similarly. He withdrew His offended Spirit from Him, and demanded obedience or the consequence. He reaped what he sowed, and yet therein God was just, as He is the justifier of reasonable actions. The word of divine truth does not attempt to teach us that the object of God raising up Pharaoh was for his destruction. God verified His word—Pharaoh reaped what he sowed. He is not alone.

ELECTION AND SELECTION.

Election and selection are different words, but to a great extent, mean the same thing. It is not strange, however, that while election is used for selection, the latter is scarcely used for the form-

er. The reason is obvious. Election is theologically used referring to the term predestination; selection, which may mean the same thing, is generally used otherwise.

The theological definition of election is: Chosen as an object of mercy or divine favor; set apart for life eternal. Since this definition is so nearly allied to predestination, it is often coupled therewith.

This word (elect) is applied to Christ, who was chosen and set apart by God the Father from all eternity, to perform the great work of redemption; and to become the Mediator between Himself and fallen man. The election of Christ was prophesied by Isaiah 43: 1—"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." Jesus in the performance of His divine commission acted in accordance with, and in fulfillment of that prophecy quoted by St. Matthew—Chapter 12: 18. There can be no doubt that Christ was and is the predestined and elected plan of salvation.

Election refers to good angels, in contradistinction to evil ones, as being the selection of God. Holy angels being elected, no doubt, having sat-

isfactorily established their righteousness during their period of probation. There must have been a season of probation, since some fell before they were established—those who fell not are the elected. The Apostle Paul in his first letter to Timothy (5: 21) speaks of the elect angels in this wise: “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.” Here it will be seen the angels were elected or established after they gave evidence of their established obedience. Probably, they were elected from eternity—and no doubt they were, for God knew those who would continue in obedience and those who would rebel. Election is one of the terms used in designating the Israelites, God’s peculiar people—see Isaiah 65: 9, 22—“I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” Again, Isaiah says—45: 4—“For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I

have even called thee by thy name: I have sur-named thee though thou hast not known me." These passages refer to Jacob—whose name was changed to Israel—and to his children who were called Israelites. They give strong evidence that predestination and election bear their strongest reference to the source of the work to be accomplished. All readers of Holy Scriptures are aware that God elected the children of Israel as His peculiar people—they were His elect—according to His own word; yet millions of them have fallen away, as St. Paul declares Romans II: 11—"I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." They fell, no doubt, but the mercies of God are still extended to His elect people. The way of salvation is still open—no change has been arranged on account of their falling away. Jesus Christ is still the life, the truth, and the way; and is set before His people as an open door; yet the elect people are dying by the thousand and missing the way, no doubt. Will God save them because they were the elect, refusing to accept His plan? or shall He change the eternal plan of salvation which determined that all should look

toward Christ for salvation, through figures, previous to His coming into the world; and after His birth and revelation should look to Him as the world's Redeemer? We doubt His intention to change the plan, for to our mind this is the plan predestined from eternity; and the heavens and earth may change, but the plan of salvation never! "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

In discussing election, we do not wish to convey the idea that God is not the proper person to elect individuals to eternal life; we believe He is. But what we wish to uncover is, the idea that this work is not done independent of man's will. We desire to show that man has to do with his election to eternal life; and that election is not alone the determined will of God, but His will guided by His knowledge of facts unchangeable. Does it not appear that we do not see so clearly the idea expressed by the word of His mouth—"For whom he did *foreknow*, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

Here we are told positively that the cause of His selection was His knowledge. He knew them from eternity; He knew what they would

be and do; knew who would thankfully accept His favor; knew who would yield obedience to the plan of salvation; knew who would continue, after yielding to the overtures of mercy (for He knew some would not continue) for Peter says—II. Peter 2: 22—"But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is returned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." God knew all the circumstances and changes and there could be no reason why they should not be elected or predestinated; and Peter, no doubt, knew our disposition to cavil and in his declaration used the expression: "The sow that was *washed* to her wallowing in the mire." This declaration will furnish us with future thoughts.

We are afraid many persons (even great writers) read carefully but a part of God's Holy Word. They read and re-read parts which favor their peculiar views, and for want of relish omit to read, or read carelessly, other important passages.

INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS IN ELECTION.

St. Paul writing to Timothy shows very distinctly, that, man has to do materially with his election—admitting that there is no doing power

in himself, and that there are diversities of individualities. We read II. Timothy 2: 19-21—"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Unless the apostle wrote when he was not under the influence of the Holy Spirit (and if he did, he would have been honest enough to so inform us, as he has on other occasions) he declares to us a positive truth: "If a man there-purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

It must be admitted that there is a helplessness in man's nature, without the assistance of God, but that help is offered and we may have it when we desire it. When we use it accordingly (to meet demands) we are what we want to be; if we desire to be, we can be: "Vessels unto hon-

our, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." This is the declaration of God's Word, whether we believe it or not—it is true.

It is a glorious thing to feel and know that we are not so helpless (with the offered help of God) as some would have us believe. We have no strength, it is true, of our own; but we own strength when we trust for it the Lord Jesus Christ. This is given to us freely and as much as we desire. Not according to what is termed "the predestinated plan" but according to earnest and practical desire which is "foreknown." Any individual may get so near to God as to actually realize His divine presence. Talk to Him as a friend talks to a friend, and knows his requests are granted.

We are a friend to predestination and election, because it is a Scripture plan—the plan that God has revealed according to His knowledge of all things; but when it is doctored up, makes us machines, accuses God for our actions, then excuses Him because there is no judge to judge Him, and then excuses us because we could not help ourselves: with Scripture in hand to sustain us, we object.

FALLING AWAY.

Another unfortunate view held by some persons, who misinterpret predestination, is, the impossibility of falling away, if truly converted. A friendly editor speaking kindly of our book "The Human Heart Illustrated", could not find his way out of the difficulty which appeared before him, in our treatment of apostasy—falling away—was compelled to say considerable in explaining his position. We were compelled to smile, but we saw the difficulty. It was caused by his indoctrinated misconception of predestination—once in grace it is impossible to fall away. To us that is a dangerous doctrine, and much evil is the consequence. "I know God has forgiven me of my sins, has cleansed my soul; He cannot go back on me."

We do not like to attempt to blame the Holy Scripture, for its doctrines are infallibly true; but if an individual can not fall away after he has received the blessing of salvation, the language of Holy Scripture misleads us; or we are too ignorant to understand its plain and practical teachings. We are ready to admit the latter, if we have reason so to do.

To say the least, there must be a possibility of

falling away, or the many Scripture cautions against it would be less than useless. Less than useless, because it would not be cautioning us against an impossibility merely, but encouraging us to believe in a possible occurrence which could never take place. Can such be attributed to divine wisdom?

It is said by persons, God's grace entering into an individual can never be completely removed; by what authority is this statement? Where shall we find the Scripture to confirm such a statement? Let us see what the Scripture says indicating the contrary. Luke 8: 13—"They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away."

Here we are ready to say, the reason the word had not the desired effect was, the soil was not congenial to the seed sown. We ask the question, is the individual responsible or God? Rocky place or not, the word had entrance and operated—sprung up said one, was received with joy—was actually believed. The individual seemed to believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for he rejoiced; if he died during the period of his trust and belief, would he not

have been saved? He seemed to be all right until temptation struck him; then he fell. Fell from what? Was it not from his standing? What was his standing? Was it not believing and rejoicing in the Holy Ghost? Read the verse over—Luke 8: 13.

We are to notice, first, That falling indicated standing, and evidently the individual stood in the strength of God—he believed and rejoiced. He received the word with joy; no one can do more for the occasion. The trouble evidently was, he did not continue to encourage the word received, and on that account hardness sprung up and destroyed the root. Secondly, falling away showed that he was there—at the place. One of the regular members, and no doubt as earnest as any other. We perceive the Scripture does not attempt to invalidate his position while he stood, but gives reason for his non-endurance. He did not remove the difficulty and let the word sink to endurance.

Christian perfection is not required to salvation, but to endure with patience the difficulties surrounding salvation. It is a shield against them. So far as salvation is concerned, no matter whether grace is the eighth of an inch or two inches deep, it will save; the disadvantage is, en-

duration in the time of difficulty. In the time of commotion, surface work will not endure.

But we are told persons possessing grace can not fall, if once they come into full possession. Let us read what inspiration says about the matter—Hebrews 6: 1-6—"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

Some individuals say it is not possible to fall away after one has been made partaker of the heavenly blessing, but inspiration says it is possible; and as to a certain class of apostasy, Scripture declares it really impossible "to renew them again unto repentance." Whom must we

believe, persons who do not know, or God who is perfectly acquainted with the truth—who is the Author of truth?

As we have presented this passage, and its thorough understanding is of great difficulty, we ought not pass it by, after it has established the fact in dispute without a doubt, in silence. It has proved that there is no stage of grace where a person is not liable to apostatize; we must now break away from the subject to give our opinion of this difficult passage: it is not difficult to one who enters into its spirit.

Many have been the conjectures of persons regarding this passage, not in relation to the possibility of individuals falling, but in “renewing them again unto repentance.”

In considering the subject in short, we see the place from which they may fall: Let us notice two special points. First, The stage reached; second, What is lost. I. The stage reached. 1. enlightenment—“were once enlightened.” 2. Heavenly gift relished—“tasted of the heavenly gift.” 3. The Holy Ghost enjoyed—“were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.” 4. Relished the word of life—“tasted the good word of God.” 5. Enjoyment of the power of the world to come—“and the powers of the world to come.”

This is the state the individual reached. Now, let us see, II. What he lost. 1. Light—"once enlightened." 2. Taste for heaven—"tasted of the heavenly gift." 3. Forsakes the Holy Ghost—"were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." 4. Taste of God's word—"tasted the good word of God." 5. Lost taste for heaven—"the powers of the world to come."

When the declaration is mingled with other expressions, one may seem mystified; but there can be no wonder of the reasonableness of the truth expressed, when it is looked upon without a prism in the divine light. An individual has lost the light wherewith he was enlightened; lost all taste for heaven and heavenly things; parted fellowship with the Holy Spirit; has no taste for the Word of God, which was once his daily food; and the power of the world to come has receded from his view, lost in the abyss of eternity; how is it possible to renew such an individual to repentance?

An individual committing a sin gives no indication that he has surrendered each and all of these influences; to the reverse, he often goes away feeling sorry for his sin. He is evidently not without light, therefore, he has not parted his fellowship with the Holy Spirit. He has not lost

his love for the Word of God neither his hope for heaven: he does not commence to be in the condition of the person mentioned by the apostle. Such a person (who has surrendered all these blessings) has no relish nor feeling for them; he can never be renewed. The total absence of one of these great essentials (the Word, light, and the Holy Ghost) is sufficient to forever remove his chance of repentance—the absence of the Holy Spirit. There can be no chance of repentance for such an individual, and there is no reason to wonder thereat.

In this Scripture alone, we have undeniable proof that an individual in the highest state of grace is capable of falling away, backsliding, or apostatizing, as we may please to term it. If that is not true, Scripture is to blame for the information obtained; for it is plain, practical, and reasonable.

St. Paul gives us another reason to believe the doctrine of apostasy. Writing to the Corinthians, he says—I. Corinthians 10: 12—"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Why this warning, if the apostle is conscious there is no danger of falling? Rather, it would be making a false impression, not to

say a false statement; and who dare accuse the inspired apostle of such motives?

But that is not all. He threatens himself of becoming a castaway, after preaching to others, if he were not careful in self-control. Let us read—I. Corinthians 9: 27—"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." What shall we say to this? shall we say we know better than that? You may say it, but we never.

But Paul is not the only sacred or inspired writer who gives us this plain and practical information, Peter makes similar declaration—II. Peter 3: 17—"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing we know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." This is certainly a straightforward and positive declaration, and the same apostle tells us that not merely are men in grace capable of falling, but that at a certain stage of the world, angels fell—II. Peter 2: 4—"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," he would have us know that in case of our falling, we must meet no better fate.

The angels, no doubt, who fell at that time were in a state of probation, yet they were perfectly holy; and notwithstanding their holy condition, during their state of probation a large number of them fell. Why is it impossible for men, with varied infirmities, to fall from a state of grace?

The false impression some persons possess of predestination and election, has also turned aside their reasonable conception from perceiving the possibility of a person falling because he possesses divine grace. Grace is not to be blamed because of falling, but not using it consistently. Though we have food in abundance surrounding us, that will not save us from starvation—the food must be used or starvation will be our portion. If any one doubt that statement, all he has to do is to give it a reasonable trial.

WILL POWER—ITS WORK.

Should we admit that predestination is what some pretend it to be, we must also admit that human will and actions have nothing to do with man's salvation; and while we frankly and freely admit, as a fact, in a peculiar view of the matter, that God is able to save man without his will or action, we can not in general terms: for it is not

true. Scripture, reason, and circumstances prove that man has to do with his salvation; if not, he could not be accountable—and it is irrational to say that we are not accountable beings.

It is true man can be saved without any effort of his own, but he can not be saved without his free consent; neither can he be saved without help from God. Since he can be saved without any effort of his own, it is reasonable to admit it, as a fact. God works to suit Himself. But in the ordinary way provided by Providence, man is saved by his effort in connection with the help of God. This St. Paul positively declared in his letter to Timothy—II. Timothy 2: 21—"If a man therefore *purge himself* from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." Here it is positively declared that it is in the power of man to cleanse himself, and he is required to do so, if he desire to be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use. While he can not do this of himself, he is furnished with divine power to assist him in so doing, and the apostle therefore makes it generic—"If a man therefore purge himself from these"—showing that any man may cleanse himself if

he so desire. The man who doubts it, denies the wisdom of inspiration.

All reasonable persons must admit that man is dependent upon God for help to perform any and every good act, but the will to perform must not be left out of the question—that is man's, though it is brought to life by the power of God. That is to say, our will is perfectly inactive unless stirred by the Spirit of God. The fact must be admitted, from the natural condition of man, his will is dormant and has no power to act unless quickened by the touch of the Divine; but it is never without that aid, unless he (man) forfeits it by continual refusing—commits the final sin against the only Being possessing power to aid.

According to divine arrangement, the power of God does not exercise compelling influence over the will of man, as a general thing, and therefore leaves the individual free to act; hence, his responsibility.

When the will is forced to act, by any influence or influences; or prevented from acting by any means outside of volition, there can be no individual responsibility. Hence, children and demented persons are not accountable, because they do not act from matured volition. Away with

volition, and judgment and justice would be a farce.

When the will has been set in perfect action by the power of grace divine, it must be so kept, or the enemy uses his chance to divert its correct operation: his success is our failure, as in the case of the five foolish virgins.

FIVE FOOLISH VIRGINS.

The Scripture says there were ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom—Matthew 25: 2—"Five of them were wise, and five were foolish."

What we desire to bring out of this reference is, individual responsibility, and the possibility of falling from grace.

The Scripture tells us that five of these virgins were foolish, but it has no reference to their purity—no reference to the purity of their character; but to the want of the use of their mental powers in providing for future contingencies. Therein they showed themselves foolish.

In this parable, Jesus taught His disciples two special truths. First, that in order to be successful, their judgment must be used in preparing for contingencies; and, secondly, that in neglecting to make this provision, it is pos-

sible to start fair, run well, but fail ultimately. That such failures may be attributed to want of judgment; hence, grace to sustain—"five were foolish."

There are those who believe the five foolish virgins were pretenders, or to modify the expression (the same thing) had no grace. If this is a parable intended to illustrate a moral, not merely must the analogy be admitted but sustained.

There were ten virgins, says the Scripture—Matthew 25: 1—"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be like unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." Virgins invariably refer to purity in every sense of the word; if they were virgins (as the Scripture calls them) they were pure. There can be no doubt of that fact. But, says one, They were morally pure, but had no grace. We are not sure about that as a fact, but the contrary.

They had lamps, and lamps will not burn without oil. They "took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." But, says another, they took their lamps without oil. It may so appear without thought, but not so after consideration.

The foolish went with the wise to meet the

bridegroom. They went probably at or about dusk, and had to wait till midnight. When they started their lamps were lighted, and continued burning till they all fell asleep, the wise as well as the foolish. That their lamps were burning when they fell asleep, there can not be a shadow of doubt; for when they found their mistake, it was too late (midnight) and they had no time to buy oil to supply their necessities, though urged to do so by their fellows.

But learn the facts from their own lips, according to inspiration, when they awoke from sleep—Matthew 25: 8—"The foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." Here we have the positive fact that their lamps had been burning, and more than that, they were evidently burning when they went to sleep, and how long they were there before they all fell asleep can not be conjectured, but evidently some time. They had oil enough in their lamps to last a reasonable time, and it could not be considered a few minutes since the entire ten virgins had fallen asleep, and were only awaked at midnight by the voice of the watcher. The trouble was, then, they took oil in their lamps, but no oil in an extra vessel to replenish the needs of their torches or flambeaux which

were called into operation longer than they expected. It was for not making provision for emergencies for which they were called "foolish virgins." We are not taking what commentators say about the matter, but inspiration. They evidently had oil on their torches, but took none in extra vessels to replenish in case of need. This unexpected occasion demanded extra supply.

If this parable has a moral, as it has, the bridegroom is the Lord Jesus, the bride is the church, the ten virgins the members of the church individually, the light from the torches the exhibition of our work, the oil represents the grace of God given to sustain spiritual life.

If the oil represents grace, the ten virgins had grace, for all their lamps were lighted and burned, and no doubt burned for some time; and lamps will not burn without oil. As in all other cases, these five unwise virgins fell from grace, because the provision made was not sufficient to meet emergency—not sufficient to sustain them in unexpected moments. Their lamps went out: they fell from grace and were shut out. If their lamps ever burned—and they could not go out unless they burned—their going out showed they exhausted the meagre supply. If, as we have said before, the oil represented grace, the analogy

demands that if there be not sufficient grace to supply, at the time it is required, the unwise will fall. Unfortunate virgins!

Take caution, our soul, supply thyself with sufficient grace—grace for unexpected moments. Remember the fall of the five foolish virgins. Foolish, because they neglected to take with them sufficient oil—they failed to look forward to unexpected happenings—sooner or later than expected.

Here are other cases of apostasy, which strengthens the phalanx of undoubted evidence that the doctrine of once in grace never out is fallacious, to say the least, and is likely to prove deceptive to persons who are not thoughtful and skillful enough to examine different passages of Scripture. Deluded persons are not guiltless, for God gives His word for our instruction, and it is ours to seek light from the Spirit to guide us correctly and directly.

By the help of the Divine Spirit, we hope in a future chapter to bring to the clear sunlight the real and positive conclusions of Scripture declaration of the doctrine of predestination and its alliances.

KNOWLEDGE FOR ACTS—MISUNDERSTOOD.

Causes and effects are so very nearly allied, in some instances, that often one is taken for the other. The sun's rising and setting are evidently caused by the action of the earth—not the sun's, and we know it; yet, we commonly place the effect for the cause, and without question. It is no strange expression to say: "The sun goes down", when in reality, to our system the sun stands still, and the earth revolves. This is the accepted term when we use it—"The sun is going down."

One of the hardest and most unyielding substances in the composition of the human body is the teeth, and yet there is an admitted fact, not merely that there is such a thing as toothache, but persons are generally having toothache; because when the tooth is extracted the ache ceases.

Who, on examining that matter carefully, would believe that their suffering was toothache? If it were really toothache, the individual, or other conditions, caused the tooth to suffer. When you have had your tooth extracted, you are not sure it is not suffering still, and some selfish person would say, he did not care, so he was not affected; and so we may go on to illus-

trate indefinitely causes for effects, effects for causes, and admitted fallacies—we forbear for the present.

Our intention is to show that things are often called by the wrong name, one thing or individual is often placed instead of another—causes for effects and effects for causes. But when positive facts are called in question, bone to bone seek their places, and muscles according to the operations of bones and nerves in the system of their varied complication find each his allotted place.

No doubt, one of the causes of difficulties and disagreement in doctrinal views arises from persons finding themselves “cornered”, so to speak; and making desperate efforts to redeem themselves, use intricate and ambiguous reasoning to extricate themselves from difficulties, stretching facts to their greatest tension and subduing their stubbornness to pliancy. This is not done in order to falsify the truth, but to establish their views; and sometimes their views are not on Scriptural grounds but early teaching or conception.

Another individual of his kind, less intelligent and conscientious, applies the pinchers and stretches the already extended fact into fallacy. Others follow in their wake. Then, this is often

coupled with human pride—a dislike to confess one's error, thinking it is weakness, and wanting to be strong, he makes any and every effort to cover his mistakes. This human feeling often mixes itself with the interpretation of divine truth, even though one may be inclined to be cautious, and proves hurtful to the cause. It is true we can never see ourselves as others see us.

We said predestination is a doctrine—a Scriptural doctrine; and so it is. It is a declaration of the decision of God, and ought never to be regarded otherwise.

One of the disadvantages of interpreting Scripture is, like the subjects before mentioned—the movement of the earth for the sun (causing day and night); toothache, for the affection of the nerve caused by decayed tooth, in many instances make unwonted change in the issue. They are not the presentation of simple facts, but accepted views on these subjects—yet there is no trouble to prove the contrary.

In like manner, a class of predestinarians settle as acts of God what alone is intended for His foreknowledge—speaking after the manner of men; yet the subject is so definitely stated in Scripture that when it is carefully and unsel-

fishly examined, aside from selfish views, there is but one conclusion.

If we were able to take Christ away from the subject, even then in justice to facts, predestination does not take away the freedom of man to act—therefore the responsibility for his acts remains.

To illustrate: God says I know this man. I know him from birth to death. I weighed his acts, one and all; measured his steps, every moment of his life; numbered his thoughts and words, according to wisdom. I offered him divine help and he accepts it. In the scale of divine justice, according to mercy, he triumphs over difficulties. He goes into forbidden paths, I send my Spirit after him, he heeds and returns imploringly. He wanders again: following the weakness of his nature, but when he hears My voice, nay, at the monition of his conscience, he crouches and cries I yield, I yield! When he hears My word, he rejoices in it, and calls Me the Rock of his salvation. He does not forsake the right, but varies from the path of rectitude in mortal weakness; having sought his latitude and longitude, he found himself across the line of demarkation: shifts his helm, and sails in favor on My ocean of existence. This he continues till

he comes to the margin of the River of Death. Being called to cross the mystic river, he wades through manfully with My rod and My staff. When the water assays to reach his breast, he waves My staff, feels with My rod for standing place, and utters with uplifted eyes: "My heart is overwhelmed;" he finds himself standing upon the Rock that is higher than he. All he lost in crossing the swelling tide of the river was, the rags of mortality. He arrives safe on the other side of the river—the bank of immortality. I know all things: these I know!

But He continues another case: I know this man from the hour of his birth to the moment of his death. I numbered the thoughts of his heart and the words of his lips—they were his alone. As he walked, I measured his steps—not one slipped My notice. I weighed the acts of his life in the scales of Justice—they were the scales of divine justice. From his birth, I sent him My divine Spirit and He offered him His help and guidance, but he invariably refuses. He treads the path of wickedness notwithstanding the Spirit's entreaties and remonstrations; he pursues his course notwithstanding all obstructions. On his way, he was allowed to fall into dangerous chasms, and again into pitfalls: all threaten

destruction. In time of troubles, he cries unto me with promises, and I offered help; but once delivered, his promises had no effect in the rectitude of his thoughts, walks, nor conversations.

He passes through life with singular views of what is, but naught of what is to come. As he passes through the waves from day to day, his only object is to ride the billows and escape their fury, and when possible, shun their scattered sprays. Latitude and longitude were not his conception, so his bark was kept above the swelling tide. At last, he was called to the margin of the river, and crossing, he had neither rod nor staff; so he was borne to the destiny of the eternally condemned. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate." God knows the actions of these two individuals, and so predestinated them accordingly; to whom did He show greater favor? If this were the only end of predestination, which of these individuals met the greater favor of Providence? If these consignments were according to positive knowledge, who was responsible for the destiny? We ought to understand the difference between knowledge and act, and action based upon righteous judgment.

KNOWLEDGE—NOT ACTS.

It is a great mistake to think that God does everything. In so concluding, we often mingle His acts with His knowledge, and call His knowledge His works. There is not one atom in the universe which God does not know, but it does Him no injustice to say; there is a great deal done, He does not do. We ought to be careful in mingling together His knowledge and His acts, for in so doing, we make against Him false accusation. There is no blessing in so doing, but contrary.

GOD FALSELY ACCUSED.

There are various ways to become false accusers of our benevolent Father, and so doing is neither acceptable to Him nor beneficial to the accuser.

One of the ways thereunto is, trying to excuse ourselves when otherwise we are blameworthy. One of the many weaknesses to which we are subject is, excusing ourselves by faulting others. This disposition began in the Garden of Eden. When God said to Adam—Genesis 3: 11—"Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" Adam replied (verse 12): "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree,

and I did eat." In like manner, when the Lord approached the woman with similar question, answering, she said—verse 13—"The serpent beguiled me and I did eat." We have followed too much these unfortunate examples. We are always ready to shift our burdens to the shoulders of our neighbor.

Often, our consciences trouble us, because we have discovered in ourselves (in our lives) and sometimes in the lives of good men, things for which we can not easily account, and we are not unwilling to find a horse and saddle for the apparent intruder; and we often saddle the wrong horse. One of the first things is, I can not understand this matter. There is no disposition on my part to do, in the spirit of wilfulness, but I have done; and Satan readily suggests, You can not help—it is your nature to do so. And often he further suggests, If there be blame, it is on Him who made you thus—none of your fault.

Accordingly, our minds being in that way, we seek passages of Scripture in which there seem to be a pliability, and we prize and prize until seemingly they incline the way which suits us best and so ease our troubled minds.

When St. Paul discovered in himself unfavorable symptoms, he attributed them to the flesh,

said—Romans 7: 20-25—“Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Here we see, Paul discovered a wonderful defect somewhere, and he went about to locate it. He did not blame God on its account, but located it in the flesh. Some persons would never have been careful enough to locate it so close to themselves, nay, in themselves, unless someone else was made responsible therefor.

In the case of John Wilmot, afterwards Earl of Rochester, and known as Lord Rochester; when he found himself drifting with the tide of this world in sin and transgression, and thought there was no way to restrain himself, he began to accuse God; and when final accountability stared him in the face, he hid under the danger-

ous cliff: "There is no God." This began his sceptical life, which caused him no little sorrow during the time of his great affliction. He afterwards confessed that when he saw himself drifting away, and thought of his accountability, to ease his troubled conscience, he said—"There is no God; there is no God!" A man may repeat a falsehood sufficiently to enable him to believe it true: that has been done more than once.

There are characters who do not allow themselves to go to such an extent; they calmly place the mistakes and sins of their lives upon God—not as a Saviour, but as being to blame for their sins. They say, We were created for these purposes and are not to be blamed for them, since we are doing what we can not do otherwise. And the less intelligent a man is, to the greater extent he carries these peculiar ideas, and so accuses God for the sins he (man) commits.

Often his accusation bears the name of predestination. They say they are serving the end for which they were created, and can do no more. Thousands of persons refuse to accept Christ from the fact their teaching causes them to believe they can not accept Him (Christ) until He is ready for them—then they will be compelled to accept Him.

The fact that they desire to continue in their sins, furnishes them the evidence that God is not ready for them, or He would draw them with an irresistible power. A goodly number of persons is really established in that belief, and others do not actually believe it, but use it as an excuse why they should not be urged to come to Christ. This is a fact known by thousands; it is the fruit coming from the misinterpretation of predestination—God so orders it, it can not be otherwise.

It is true, if God so ordered it, it could not be otherwise; but the question is, has He so ordered, or are we misinterpreting Him? Woe to the misinterpreter—the false accusers of God.

ALL POWER AND WISDOM.

The question is often asked, has not God all power? did He not know our weaknesses? why did He create us with these frailties, knowing we would fall, leave us to ourselves so causing us to fall? Why should this be done, if it were not His will—knowing all things and having all power?

It has been said, it is not a difficult thing for a fool to ask questions which a wise man can not answer. This is not applicable in this case, how-

ever. This question may be answered by one who is not wise, according to the wisdom of this world, but who humbly sits at the Master's feet, perceives and understands the gentle whisper of the Spirit divine.

MAN CREATED FOR HAPPINESS.

Before answering, we ask this question: What is the principal source of happiness? What is happiness? If we answer these questions, you will scarcely object. We answer, then, Happiness is satisfaction in the highest and broadest sense; and the source of it, Choice.

There are very few persons who do not know something of happiness or unhappiness. Being opposite one to the other, one gives some idea of the other. Happiness has the same source in religious matters as otherwise, and this fact was brought out by Jesus Himself, in the case of Simon who was displeased at the occasion of the woman washing the Saviour's feet, with her tears, and wiping them with the hairs of her head. The Scripture presents the circumstances as follows—Luke 7: 37-43—"Behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, And

stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged."

Here, according to Simon's consistent reasoning, the Saviour decided that the woman was the happier of the two—the more grateful from her action—because she was satisfied that she had been forgiven of great sins. This was not the feeling of Simon, according to his action; and it is brought out by the Saviour's question: "Which of them will love most?" and rightly "Simon

answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most."

This woman was satisfied—greatly satisfied that while she was a great sinner, she met an exceedingly great Saviour. She showed her love in adoration, and He reciprocated in fully and frankly forgiving her all her sins.

We do not think it necessary to do more than state the fact, before mentioned, that happiness is satisfaction in its highest and broadest sense—the individual choice fully realized.

All reasonable persons confess that the laws of our being, and the laws of the universe (as far as we know them) are the most reasonable and complete which wisdom could produce: in them is seen the work of Omniscience.

As to happiness being the object of choice, it may be seen that some persons choose to eat lemons, and seem to enjoy them with all their heart, while an acid orange can not be endured by others. Acid is acid (is sour) under any and all circumstances; yet, because of the taste and choice of some individuals it is greatly enjoyed; while its use would be punishment to another. The last mentioned individual may think the same of sugar as the former of lemon, and there can be no ordinary adjustment to the

reverse. To make either or each of these individuals happy, he must be allowed to have his choice—the thing that pleases him. It would be a matter of impossibility to make the person happy by forcing him to eat lemon against his will and taste; the same may be said of the person disliking sugar. It must be concluded, therefore, the only way to make persons happy is, to allow each to have what suits him—what he desires. How can you make a person happy by forcing upon him that for which he has no desire nor taste? Here it may be observed, different persons have different tastes, and to make each happy you must allow him to follow the inclination of his taste, according to his will.

But that you may see the fact more clearly, let us suppose that the varied tastes or desires of individuals were taken away; so they will not differ: all must like the same thing, the same way, under the same circumstance—it is done. Now you have a creature who knows no difference between sugar and lemon, between egg and a stone, between chalk and cheese. A man who loves every other man's wife as well as he does his own, a woman who loves every other woman's husband as well as she does her own—who has no more preference for her children

than for a young serpent. How would you like that state of things? Now, we are happy and enjoy things which please us, and in order to know what pleases us, evidently we must know what does not. To be deprived of the knowledge of one of these, deprives us of the other also; hence, no taste nor will of our own. What remarkable creatures we would be to be sure.

But, again: Say we have will and taste, but God controls them. In that event, they would be no more ours but God's, but even if they were placed in our possession and termed our own, though God's, what would be the consequence—think of the ultimate.

If you have a will it is bound to show itself. It shows itself in children when they are very young. If the will be placed in your possession, somebody will attempt to use it, though he die trying, and would some time use it indiscreetly. In attempting to use it indiscreetly we must be checked or prevented from using it; what would be the result? why, rebellion.

We may notice this fact in children as they advance in years. Take a girl for instance. She is brought up to see as her parents see, think as they think, talk as they talk, know as they know, and to reason as they reason. She has a will,

and that will will not always be the will of her parents. She has a will to marry for example, and her parents see reason to the contrary—the next thing she runs away and is married. That is the case of having a will, and when it is crossed the individual rebels. We must evidently have will and taste if we are to be happy. How much better would it be if we have occasion to rebel because our ardent desire was crossed, or if we carried out our will and so crossed God's providence?

The rebellion of the angels in heaven was occasioned by God's obstructing their inconsistent desire. They had wills and would satisfy them, unrighteous though they were; God prevented them from carrying out their desire, and they rebelled. In their rebellion, they found no place of redemption. Even in our fall, we have the better chance—we have been offered redemption through Christ Jesus. It is not well to assume to have better judgment than God; to know how we might have been created to prevent us from falling. The man doing so belittles himself in the sight of reasonable men, spirits good and evil, and in the eyes of the Eternal One.

To say God knows man in his strength and weaknesses, is a fact expressed according to rea-

son; but to conclude, on that account, God willed his (man's) fall, falsely accuses the Master, and we would not be a willing participant in such an accusation.

Speaking cautiously, God could not prevent man from exercising his free will, and especially when the exercise thereof was to decide his future destiny—happiness or misery. He must choose for himself. If another choose for him, and he is not pleased therewith, he can not be happy. Happiness, we repeat, demands that which is pleasing to the will, and which is obtained only by choice.

In the creation of man he was susceptible to happiness, and that admitted the acts and freedom of his will. Good and evil were placed before him and the consequence of the use of either explained—he must work out his own destiny.

According to knowledge God knew that he would fall, and in the order of providence provided for his salvation. What more could he do? To prevent his fall he must cross the bounds of His own wisdom, and if unlawful to the divine will to restrict the power of man's will, he must prepare to cross and re-cross the path of providence at any moment; for he is

likely to shift his course at his inclination. Divine wisdom chose to make provision for the Fall, and predestinated that the way provided shall be the only medium which could be afforded—Romans 8: 29—"Did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."

WHAT PREDESTINATION CAN NOT MEAN.

Neither man, angel, nor devil can fathom the mind of God. It is not always possible, therefore, to conceive the intention of God—what He means in every thing He says. All reasonable persons admit this fact. One thing may be concluded, however, since God can not contradict Himself, any two or more statements which seem to come in contact or contradict each other, God's views or idea in the matter is misunderstood.

WHAT GOD CAN NOT DO.

It has been stated, a rather smart individual who would exhibit his smartness, proposed to find something which God can not do. In his ambitious struggles, he conceived the idea that God could not form two mountains, adjacent, without a valley between. We are not sure God could not do so, and therefore we are sure our wise friend is not certain of the fact stated.

Without attempting to exhibit skill in discoveries, we could suggest an easier and surer (but not a new) idea— God can not contradict Himself. Whenever there seems to be a contradiction in the utterance of God, the understanding is undoubtedly misled; the intention of God is not understood, and reasonable seeking will so discover. Reasonable seeking has a great deal to do with the discovery of facts connected with divine truths. Seeking which never fails to discover must be honest, earnest, humble, and if necessary, persistent. Truths delivered from the mouth of God can never contradict others, for He sees as well as knows all things at the same time, and they are never out of His immediate views: it is impossible, then, for Omniscience to contradict Himself. When it so appears, the understanding is led astray; and must seek, if it would find the right way.

GOD NEVER PRETENDS.

It is useless to think that God ever pretends. He can not, because it is against His principles— eternal truth—so to do. He will not, for He is under obligation to no one for His sayings or acts; He does not, because He will not lay an

example contrary to honest purpose before the creatures of His handiwork.

If predestination means: I have settled the work of man's salvation from eternity, according to the order of My providence; so it is and must be—no change can occur: then, what does this mean—Mark 16: 15, 16—“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned.” If God's almighty power has already decreed and settled the matter, why “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature?” Why the statement “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned?” Why offer bread to a man whom it is known it is utterly impossible to accept—much less eat? Is the gospel preached to men intended to be another case of the myth Tantalus (from whom the word tantalize derived) who having discovered the secrets of the gods to men, was consigned to hell, where he is placed up to his chin in water, and though in anguish from thirst, can never taste the water? If God offers the gospel to men whom He knows can never accept it, is it not the punishment of Tantalus re-

peated? with this difference, his punishment was for a cause, but this, because the individuals were left out of the plan of salvation, consigned to the pit of destruction from eternity, for not doing what they have no power to do—no cause.

Keeping with the character of a benevolent, merciful, divine Father, can His word "Predestination" mean: "It pleased Me, the Eternal God, according to My divine will, irrespective of thoughts or actions of others, to have mercy upon a part of mankind, and so decree that that part shall be eternally saved: I decide others shall be damned." Can this be the possible meaning of predestination? Read John 3: 15-19—"That whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world,

and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

It is useless to comment on this clear cut passage of Scripture, when it is brought in contact with the fallacy called predestination; we simply ask what does "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" mean, in the 15th and 16th verses? It will be noticed that the quotation of the two verses is exactly the same—one succeeding the other—with the single exception of the words eternal and everlasting, and that is done by the translators. In the original the same word is used by the sacred writer in both verses—"Ages without end." Why not Whosoever can (if whosoever must be used) instead of whosoever will, since a part of mankind has no power—according to some.

The same writer suggests to us again that all individuals have wills, and have power to use them. See Revelations 22: 17—"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Shall we say to the evangelist, St. John, You are mistaken—some men can not come: they are out of the plan of salvation?

Shall we say, Please change the expression, as you have it, it is unlimited: the plan of salvation is limited to those whom God has pleased to elect to eternal life. We are willing to admit our ignorance, but we would not carry it so far. In the presence of such a divine declaration, that would seem flying in the face of wisdom—wisdom divine.

Predestination can not mean, nay, does not mean God from eternity selected part of the world to be saved, and the remainder to be condemned. To know a thing, and to do it are very different things. We would scarcely be executed for knowing a man was murdered, but our chances for escape would be slim if it were known we committed the crime.

We desire to impress upon the minds of individuals that we commit a criminal offence when we mingle together the knowledge and acts of God, and call the latter the former. Is it reasonable to place on God the crimes we have committed, saying: We have stolen a man's money, it is not we but God? He not merely knew that we would steal this money but made us to steal it—not our fault by any means—it is God's. Does not such talk—we were going to say argument, but there is no argument therein; does not

such talk appear ridiculous? It is the talk some people advance as argument in support of predestination.

ANOTHER MISCONCEPTION.

No one could persuade certain persons that their lives depend on their acts, and yet their acts so declare. They say, We can not die until our time comes, but as soon as they are sick they send for physicians and spend their last cent and more, making efforts to extend their lives. They can not see that their acts contradict their own argument.

The idea they advance is, that God made them to die a certain death, at such and such a time, under this or that condition; and yet, they fight strongly against heaven's decree trying to extend their earthly existence.

It is certain God has as much to do with the death as with the birth of individuals. To illustrate: A candle is made of wick, tallow or sperm. It is made a certain length with required material. If that candle is placed where it can burn without disturbance (wind or otherwise) it will give light or burn a certain length of time. In case of disturbance, in violation of the law of its existence, it goes out sooner.

Should it go out sooner than the allotted time, because of violation of the laws of its existence, would you attribute the shortness of its burning to the maker? It would certainly burn for a certain length of time, were it not compelled to struggle against laws contrary to its existence. All the responsibility the maker assumes is, it will burn so long, if the law of its existence is not violated. Could you reasonably expect more?

This is a reasonable illustration of man's existence. God made man with the capacity to endure certain length of time, but does that guarantee his endurance should he violate the laws of his existence—and especially if he is unable to make amends for the violation. That fact is strikingly illustrated from the efforts we make in cases of sickness to restore ourselves to health. In order that we may extend our existence, we put forth every effort in our power to check ailments caused by the violation of the laws of our being.

Every pain we suffer is from some violation of the laws of our being. It is certain if we violate no law of our existence, we will never suffer pain, notwithstanding our talk of hereditary diseases. If diseases are hereditary they go in a

dormant state, and can never be awakened unless some law is violated. We do not believe in hereditary disease anyhow. We believe in possible hereditary weaknesses or acute liabilities. It must be remembered, we reap what we sow, and do so at a merciful discount.

Some things we get in the habit of saying, and say them whether or not they mean anything, mean the contrary or not: we say them from custom—the same is true of doing. Some persons writing with a pencil put it on their tongue to make it write black, not thinking it would serve to write but one or two words in that condition, and in case of writing two thousand words, to harmonize the writing, it must be dampened a thousand times, or have the writing look two words black and the others pale for a certain distance—till the pencil is dampened again. Too many thoughtless things are said and done, and the greatest evil is, our willingness to place them on others: often on God; and predestination is often made the medium in so doing, though it was never intended so to be.

LIVES MATERIALLY DEPEND ON ACTIONS.

There is certainly a limit to the life of every individual, and the applicability of the word mor-

tal is an indicative proof; notwithstanding, many a life has been shortened for want of proper care and attention. By reason of our fallen nature, all men must die—this is the eternal decree; and while it can not be changed in the certainty of death, life may be shortened by the violation of laws connected with its existence, regardless of what persons may say in relation to the foreordained plan from eternity.

Every individual comes into the world with the capacity to endure the ordinary and extraordinary circumstances of life, but the endurance does not comprehend or include violation of any of the laws of existence. Every violation demands a penalty in the moral, spiritual, or physical world; and sooner or later the demand must be met in one way or another.

For instance, The heart received commission from the hand of its Creator to force the blood through the various arteries of the body, over the entire system; but there is a certain period of every twenty-four hours of each day the body must be placed in a position (horizontal) when the heart will not be required to exert extraordinary powers, as the reclining position of the body enables it (the heart) to perform its func-

tions with greater ease and less effort—a kind of rest.

For this reason, as well as others, from six to eight hours of the twenty-four, the body ought to be reclining, or more correctly expressed, ought to be in a horizontal position. Such a position releases the heart from extraordinary efforts in accomplishing its work—forcing sufficient blood to the brain—as it is more difficult to force upward than otherwise. For this reason, a person who does not or can not lie down, can enjoy life but a short time; for the unremitting efforts of the heart, having to force blood to the head while the body is in a perpendicular or upright posture, at all times (day and night) overtakes the endurance of the heart—life fails. It will be noticed, life fails because the law governing existence has been violated. This would be the natural consequence whether or not the violation was done on purpose or otherwise.

In such a case, the cause of death is overtaxing the energy of the heart, and so exhausting the power of resource; and in an event of the kind it can be plainly seen that a law has been violated which deprives the heart of the relaxation necessary to recuperation; and the consequence is, it collapsed. That life may be enjoyed to the full-

est extent—in health and creative endurance—the dictum of its laws must meet no obstruction. Physical as well as moral, for every violation there is a penalty. Give every organ its lawful due, and there will be no resentment ; but, burden any contrary to the laws of its being, and wherever the crossing point in the line of natural existence takes place, corresponding struggle will be the result. Let the shuttle run freely, according to the laws of its being, and life will continue according to the measure of its creative capacity. Like the candle, if no wind or other circumstances disturb its blaze, it will continue to burn according to the capability of its construction.

That the proper exercise of the functions of the body for the extension or shortening of our lives is in our possession—entirely entrusted in our care—is evident from the effort made by inferior animals for health, safety, and the prolongation of their lives. There can be no doubt that if inferior creatures, by instinctive endowment, give such marked proofs of their concern for life, health, etc. ; creatures of reason can not afford to plead ignorance of the blessings of conception of what is more to them than to beasts. The beasts die, and that ends their existence : creatures of reason die to live eternally in happi-

ness or in woe: they are accountable for the manner they exercise their privilege in carrying out the will of Providence.

Human beings are responsible for their health, lives, etc.; and often their ailments and sufferings are fruits of their disregard for the laws regulating their existence. To plead ignorance of these laws, is to confess our inferiority to the beasts which perish. It is true, we may not be able to designate the laws governing our being specifically, but we perceive whenever we come in contact with them—they impress us keenly, when we have not walkd over them until they are utterly dormant, as a pin coming in contact with our active limbs. It is useless, therefore, to argue that our lives do not depend, to a great extent, on our actions; but on the foreordained plan of Providence. We repeat, God knowing what we would do, can not imply that we are not responsible, but He: Scriptural predestination never intended to advance the idea of our helplessness in the exercise of our will powers. God only cares for men when they can not care for themselves. No reasonable man doubts that fact, for if he sees a train coming and he defies it in the name of the Lord, he will have but a short time to continue his defiance.

GUILT—THE RESULT OF FREE WILL.

If real justice, in favor of individuals, is to be found anywhere, under any and all circumstances, it is in God's dealings with His creatures. For this reason the law governing or holding persons responsible for acts committed by their free will, exempted women who made vows while they were under restrictions of father or husband.

When the Almighty gave laws to govern sacred vows made, He had this to say of vows made by a woman under the control of her father—Numbers 30: 3-5—"If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth; And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her."

A wife under the influence of her husband, merited similar allowance, and so the Scripture says of her—Numbers 30: 6-8—"And if she had

at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and the Lord shall forgive her."

Here the character of a just and merciful Father is presented, and His mindfulness of those who could not in all cases exercise their desire or intention, because they were under certain restrictions. Their will was often bound up with and controlled by others, and because such facts in the view of the Creator militated the free exercise of the individual will, He said in each case, when the restriction was exercised—verses 5, 8—"And the Lord shall forgive her." If through the restriction of her father she could not exercise her free will, God said to Moses: "The Lord shall forgive her;" and if her husband obstructed her way in the performance of her vows, after she had uttered them, He declared: "The Lord shall forgive her." Is not the consideration of the Father

of Justice tempered with mercy and wisdom unbounded?

It is scarcely necessary to present a more striking passage of Scripture to prove that God will not hold an individual guilty when the exercise of his free will has been obstructed, for this is seen in the very thoughtful utterances of the foregoing. Can it be possible that the same Divine Father having entirely removed the lever which operates the power of the will in its free exercise, and without which it is powerless in performing any act toward obedience to His will, withhold or remove the power, knowing that every good act depends thereon, predestined the individuals to eternal destruction because they will not do what He knows they are unable to do, appoint a day of judgment, call before Him those individuals—conscious they had no power to exercise their will in obeying His commands, He having divested them of every vestige of energy to will and to do His pleasure—yet in judgment, because they did not do that which He knew was utterly impossible, and so ordained by the finger of His Almighty power, consigns them to eternal destruction? Does it appear in the light of reason, established upon the principle of divine equity—just in all His acts—that God will in such a case

show Himself worse than Pharaoh? for the latter only whipped for not being able to perform the task which he made extremely difficult; but God, consigns to eternal destruction for not performing acts which He Himself made utterly impossible to be performed from eternity. What shall we name such a doctrine? not predestination! nay, Scriptural predestination stands above any act of reasonable criticism, as having even the appearance of injustice.

God can not help knowing all things from eternity to eternity, and to declare that He made provisions for whom He knew, determined because of their intention, and in that He made provision, opened a door—an effectual door—and ordained it the only entrance into His kingdom, declaring that that door was His Son whom He had anointed Prophet, Priest, and King; and the Saviour Himself, when He was in the world, declared—John 10: 9—“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.” This is another declaration which declares the universality of God’s offered mercies, and if God in His knowledge, called His foreknowledge (speaking after the manner of men) made provision for the rescue, according to

a predetermined plan, what could that have to do with the exercise of the free will of individuals? —“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

CHAPTER III.

CALVINISTIC PREDESTINATION.

It is not a pleasant thing to be considered incredulous, yet persons should know what and why they believe, before professing belief. This is in accordance with the apostle's direction, not merely to know, but to be able to give reason for our hope, and we would add our beliefs.

If many persons knew what they really profess to believe, they would scarcely be willing to continue to claim belief therein. We desire to speak, therefore, of predestination in the light of Calvinism.

For good reason, no doubt, predestination is termed Calvinism, but as we mentioned in a previous chapter, this noted doctrine was earnestly discussed long before the time of Calvin. He, it appears, gave it more prominence than his predecessors; hence, the appellation.

That we may observe how easy it is, not merely to slip the track, though pursuing the way of wisdom and righteousness, and do so unconsciously—for we believe Calvin was conscientious in his expressed views—let us notice a few of the evidently mistaken views vindicated by him, who like a mighty moving locomotive, dragged the train of cars thitherward, all depending upon the mighty power of a great exponent of Holy Scripture. Thence we may learn how it is possible for zeal, though surrounded with much learning, to produce spots large enough to obscure the rays of the noonday sun, and leave the individual unconscious of what may appear to others real contradiction.

Calvin taught—"Institutes," Book III., Chapter 21—"Predestination we call the eternal decree of God; by which He hath determined in Himself what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being *created for one or other of these ends*, we say, he is predestinated, either to life, or to death."

Having spoken of the election of the race of Abraham, then of particular branches of that

race, he continues: "Though it is sufficiently clear, that God, in His secret counsel, freely chooses whom He will, and rejects others, His gratuitous election is but half displayed till we come to particular individuals, to whom God not only offers salvation, but assigns it in such a manner that the certainty of the effect is liable to no suspense or doubt." He proceeds to give the summary of the chapter in which he discusses this doctrine in the following words: "In conformity, therefore, to the clear doctrine of the Scripture, we assert, that by an eternal and immutable counsel, God hath once for all determined both whom He would admit to salvation, and whom He would condemn to destruction. We affirm that this counsel, as far as concerns the elect, is founded on His gratuitous mercy, totally irrespective of human merit; but that to those whom he devotes to condemnation, the gate of life is closed by a just and irreprehensible, but *incomprehensible*, judgment. In the elect, we consider calling as an evidence of election; and justification as another token of His manifestation, till they arrive in glory, which constitutes its completion. As God seals His elect by vocation and justification, so by excluding the reprobate from the knowledge of His name, and sanc-

tification of His Spirit, He affords another indication of the judgment that awaits them."

This is not the sum and substance of this noted writer's views. He makes it plain that the predestination which he taught had no reference to the foreknowledge of God, regarding the foreseen conduct of the reprobate. He says—Book III., Chapter 22—"It is a notion commonly entertained, that God, foreseeing what would be the respective merits of every individual, makes a correspondent distinction between different persons; that He adopts as His children such as He foreknows will be deserving of His grace; and devotes to the damnation of death others, whose dispositions He sees will be inclined to wickedness and impiety. Thus they not only obscure election by covering it with the veil of foreknowledge, but pretend that it originates in another cause." Agreeing with this view, a little farther he asserts that election does not flow from holiness, but holiness from election. It is needless to inquire farther into the matter, for he positively excludes all human efforts, good or bad, demanded or not, from man's salvation; says: "For when it is said, that the faithful are elected that they should be holy, it is fully implied, that the holiness they were in future to possess had its

origin in election." With this doctrine the necessity of repentance, though urgently demanded, is set aside, and it is to be wondered that any church could afford to submit to such doctrine.

Calvin makes the declaration of God in relation to Jacob and Esau, loved and hated, before they had done good or evil, an evidence that the only reason of election and reprobation can be found nowhere save in God's "secret counsel." He positively disallows the future wickedness of the reprobate to have been considered in the decree of their rejection, and makes similar declaration in regard to the righteousness of the elect having no effect on their respective fates. Here are his words: "'God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.' You see how he (the apostle) attributes *both to the mere will* of God. If, therefore, we can assign no reason why he grants mercy to his people but because such is his pleasure, neither shall we find any other cause but his will for the reprobation of others. For when God is said to harden, or show mercy on whom he pleases, men are taught, by this declaration, to see *no cause beside His will*. He further says: "Many, indeed, as if they wished to avert odium from God, admit election in such a way as to deny that any one is

reprobated. But this is puerile and absurd; because election itself could not exist, without being opposed to reprobation;—whom God *passes by He therefore reprobates*; and *from no other cause* than His determination to exclude them from the inheritance which He predestinates for His children.”—Book III., Chapter 23.

Such is the scheme of predestination unfolded by Calvin, and in his reply to objections from those who called in question the justice of such procedure, he answers: “They inquire (the objectors) by what right the Lord is angry with His creatures who had not provoked Him by any previous offence; for that to devote to destruction whom He pleases, is more like the caprice of a tyrant, than the lawful sentence of a judge. If such thoughts ever enter into the minds of pious men, they will be sufficiently enabled to break their violence by this one consideration, how exceedingly presumptuous it is, only to inquire into the cause of the divine *will*; which is, in fact, and is justly entitled to be, the *cause* of everything that exists. For if it has any cause, then there must be something antecedent on which it depends, which it is impious to suppose. For the will of God is the highest rule of justice; so that what He wills must be considered

just, for this very reason, because He wills it." From this declaration, it will be seen, the writer assumes the very thing in dispute, that God willed the destruction of a part of the human race, "For no other cause than because He wills it;" and any careful reader of Holy Scripture knows that the Word of God furnishes no proof of this assumption, but, on the contrary, it ascribes the death of him that dieth to his will and the work of his hands—not to the will of God, for He wills not the death of a sinner.

The writer assigns as a reason why persons should not inquire into the reasonableness or unreasonableness of his assertion, impiety. He does not leave it as a matter of fact that there are qualities in God which He presents to us as ruler of His will; therefore, to inquire if those qualities accord with the interpretation of the writer could scarcely be considered impiety, but ought to be done in truth and with propriety.

For example, God has revealed Himself to His creatures as a God of perfect wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, mercy, etc.; therefore, the exercise of His will, as a consequence, flows from the perfection of his nature, and is much more honorable and tender in Scriptural view where it is ever tempered with justice and mercy than

it could be if it were seen in the administration of punishment without the slightest provocation from the indication of guilt. When the writer calls the will of God the "highest rule of justice," beyond which we can not push our inquiries, he rather confounds the will of God as a rule of justice to us as well as to His wisdom.

It is true, God is under no obligation to give account of His acts, but His revealed acts are to us the rule of life—and we have no other—if, therefore, His acts be so contrary to His demands, how could we have in Him a guide and perfect model? But as we will review these matters hereafter, we continue the quotations from our author.

This writer was not content to leave the matter at the stage before quoted, but extended the breach by resorting to an argument in which he has been generally followed by those who adopted his system with some modification. He says: "As we are all corrupt by sin, we must necessarily be odious to God, and that not from tyrannical cruelty, but in the most *equitable estimation* of justice. If all whom the Lord predestinates to death are, in their natural condition, liable to the sentence of death, what injustice do they complain of receiving from Him?" To us,

there can be no doubt, the last sentence appears unreasonable, if not contradictory; from the fact, this reprobation has been accomplished from all eternity, and since the writer objects to calling the foreknowledge of God in question as a guide to reprobation and election; how could it be reasonable in condemning individuals as sinners who had not sinned, neither would His foreknowledge take into account their intention to sin? This is fairly stated by the writer who expresses himself against rejoinders: "They object, were they not by the decree of God antecedently predestinated to that corruption which is now stated as the cause of their condemnation? When they perish in their corruption, therefore, they only suffer the punishment of that misery into which, in consequence of His predestination, Adam fell, and precipitated his posterity with him." This reply only shows how truly unanswerable were the objections to his system of predestination. "I confess," he says, "indeed, that all the descendants of Adam fell, by the divine will, into that miserable condition in which they are now involved; and this is what I asserted from the beginning, that we must always return at last to the sovereign determination of God's will; the cause of which is hidden in Himself. But it follows not,

therefore, that God is liable to this reproach; for we will answer them in the language of Paul, 'O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?'

Calvin joins and disjoins his argument with that of Augustine as to God's foreknowledge as a reasonable cause for His conclusion in the case of predestination. He, however, switches off in justification of the act of God by maintaining the justice of His unlimited *will*—His *will* is justification of any act performed by Him. He says: "I say, with Augustine, that the Lord created those whom He certainly foreknew would fall into destruction; and that this was actually so, because *he willed it*; but of His will, it belongs not to us to demand the reason, which we are incapable of comprehending; nor is it reasonable, that the divine will should be made the subject of controversy with us, which is only another name for the highest rule of justice." In this utterance he tries to shut out the necessity of pursuing this course of argument, as he, no doubt, perceived the unanswerableness of the objection which the evasion fails not to prove. He further declares: "For since God foresees future events only in consequence of *His decree that they shall happen*,

it is useless to contend about foreknowledge, while it is evident that all things come to pass rather by ordination and decree." He confesses, notwithstanding: "It is a *horrible decree*, I confess; but no one can deny that God foreknew the future fate of man before he created him; and that he did foreknow it, because it was *appointed* by his own *decree*."

PRACTICAL REVIEW OF CALVIN'S ARGUMENT.

We have quoted several passages from the noted leader of Calvinistic predestination, on the doctrine bearing his name; and it may not be difficult to conceive how a doctrine which in some instances contradicts Scriptural facts, succeeded in gaining ground among learned and devout men.

Of all subjects, truth is the most difficult to be comprehended; forasmuch as certain truths can not be known unless revealed. This may be conceived from the fact that there are truths which are connected with other truths, past and future—they themselves of the present. Man can not know, assuredly, but the present. There are cases where he may be able to learn of the past, but can not the future. These facts must be carefully considered in searching for the truth,

and for these reasons truth must be very carefully dealt with, as in some cases it can only be positively known by revelation, and occasionally there appear in revelation ambiguities and mysteries.

In either of these cases—ambiguity or mystery—if truth be carefully and prayerfully observed, as revealed in Scripture, it will be seen that the finger of inspiration points to the unerring voice, speaking in another place, or in other places, and giving the right side of ambiguity and clearing away the mist of mystery. When this is not done, it leaves the truth as the secret of God, not unfolded to man; and it is rarely wise to meddle with such unraveled mysteries. There can be no doubt that Scripture explains Scripture, and when it fails so to do, it is well to go lightly.

EXAMPLE.

In the Acts of the Apostles—Chapter 13: 22—the declaration of God is: “I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart.” It is known that Scripture has laid at the door of David very grievous accusation, therefore men have been slow to conceive how David could be a man after God’s own heart.

They have failed to notice, first, that God said, "a man," not a god nor angel, "after mine own heart." Secondly, they seem not to understand what is meant by the expression, "after mine own heart." Let us search the Scripture for God's meaning, and the declaration is clear.

David was king over Israel, and it is not expected when a man wears a crown he will be absorbed and carried away in the service of the sanctuary. Let David speak for himself, then place the utterances of God and David side by side; then, listen to the harmony and see whether or not David was a man after God's own heart. King David said—Psalm 122: 1, 2—"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." Again—Psalm 84: 10—"For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." The Lord speaking on a similar subject, says—Psalm 87: 2—"The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."

The Word of God tells us of His special love for His peculiar people, here called "Jacob;" but in the Psalm quoted, He declares, He loves the gates of Zion—the temple at Jerusalem, the

church of His choice—better than all the dwellings of Jacob. In this same house King David would rather be a door-keeper—notwithstanding he then wore the crown of Israel—than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. David declares his feet shall stand within those gates, O Jerusalem. It is not hard to see how the heart of this man harmonized with that of God; hence, whatever may be the conclusion of men, the Scripture does not merely express but explains how David was a man after God's own heart.

LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE DO NOT PREVENT
SERIOUS ERRORS.

Neither learning nor experience, nor both, are a guaranty against liability to err. It is an easier thing for a learned and well experienced man to be mistaken than is frequently supposed; and the greater his wisdom, when he errs, the greater the mistake.

Take Solomon for example. It is said he was the wisest man living, and yet with all his wisdom, he attempted to do consistent service to God while he possessed one thousand wives; and a large number of them idolaters. The wiser the man, the greater the mistake when he makes one.

It is easy for a man of learning and ripe experience to be mistaken, first, from the fact great learning and experience impose a great deal of confidence in one's self, to support his matured conclusion; and they inspire in others similar confidence that the individual can not be mistaken because of his great learning and ripe experience, and more especially so, when the person is noted for candor. Yet, these things are not barriers against mistaken views, but rather precursors—strange to say—for the same reason.

Secondly, the learned and well informed man finding himself cornered by some unforeseen circumstance, is scarcely willing to break down the great power of his influence, as he may think, by saying: "I am mistaken"; but rather seeks some other way out of the difficulty. In so doing, he may not be accused of deception nor misleading, for it is rather a case of self preservation—trying to retain what he has obtained by years of toil. The work is done notwithstanding.

Then, thirdly, an apparent insignificant error is likely to increase in enormity unthought of, as it is called in question; for something must be added every time a doubt is expressed; and as in the matter of the habit of taking medicine: for effect the dose must be increased.

We have that fact manifested in Peter's denial of the blessed Saviour. First, he simply denied Him; the second time, he denied him vehemently; and a third time he cursed and swore as an evidence of the truth of his denial.

Many times individuals have been compelled to make strong assertions or denials to sustain themselves which they never dreamt of the necessity. Rather than prove themselves flat failures in comprehending certain situations, they have been forced to argue themselves to the surface, when so doing or lost in the whirl was the inevitable result. An error under such circumstances is rather an easy thing.

This is especially true of individuals who have attained wide reputations. Man is mortal, and retains human instinct through the varied stages of life. Once in the front rank, he has no desire to be placed in the rear—having abilities, it is not to be supposed that he will not use them to sustain himself. Any charge against him in such cases has to struggle, rightly, against self-preservation; the highest law of nature.

We are not, however, from the statement advanced, to doubt the excellent reasoning of good men, but to examine the views of all persons in the light of truth and reason, and be ready, cau-

tiously, to disagree with them; especially if it appears their expressed views conflict with reason and truth—divine utterance.

CALVIN'S DEFINITION.

Says the great exponent of divine revelation—Calvin—"Predestination we call the eternal decree of God; by which he hath determined in himself what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being *created for one or other of these ends*, we say, he is predestinated, either to life, or to death." Here we have the plain definition of this writer.

CALVIN DISAGREES WITH SCRIPTURE.

From what source does Calvin obtain permission (divine authority) to unite creation and destiny? and especially when the destiny expounded by him does not, can not, represent the fullness of the attributes of God, save what he terms *His will*.

One would scarcely find fault with the leading part of Calvin's definition—"Predestination we call the eternal decree of God"; but as he continues, he begins a breach which widens as he

advances. He continues: "By which he hath determined in himself what he would have to become of every individual of mankind." At this stage in his argument, he connects creation and destiny, and seems to make destiny the primal object of creation: the eternal decree of God by which he determines in himself what he would have become of every individual of mankind." Then he breaks out: "For they are not all created with similar destiny; but eternal life is fore-ordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being *created for one or other of these ends*, we say, he is predestinated, either to life, or to death."

From these declarations of Calvin, one would infer, that the object of creation was predestination, as he explains it: for the salvation of some and the condemnation of others. Hear what revelation says in regard to this matter—Ecclesiastes 7: 29—"Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." This is far from declaring that God created part of the human family for damnation. The inspired writer places the responsibility upon man, that God created him upright; but he sought out many inventions. Hear another Scripture—Genesis 1: 27—"So God

created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Neither does this passage show that God created man with the object of saving some and condemning others. Paul, speaking of the image of God in man, says: "For man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God."

CAUSE OF ERROR.

The real cause which seems to lead Calvin astray is, what he termed the will of God—the unlimited and unquestioned will of God; and he used his argument in relation thereto in such a way as to cause individuals to dread questioning the argument. It must be remembered, while all must admit the unlimited will of God, He has attributes which are fully as unlimited as His will; when, therefore, we quote the unlimited will to the abandonment of His tender mercies, no matter how well our intention may be, by twisting the purposes of God, we exhibit a warped side of His justice. Reading Calvin's argument on predestination, it is strange if any reasonable individual fails to discover the fact — that he takes justice and mercy out of the way to

establish God's unlimited will. We quote him again.

Calvin says: "Predestination we call the eternal decree of God; by which he hath determined in himself what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others." The more we quote this writer, the more distressing his argument appears to us, and we believe will so appear to every conscientious thinker. The Holy Scripture speaks of the object of creation for no other purpose than the glory of God; and while it is true, God saving any individual pronounces His glory; one can not see how damning another part of the human race for no other reason than His unlimited will can eternally exhibit His glory to the gaze of the universe. "I damned you, not because of evil act, nor intent, but because it pleased me so to do: glory over me, and every act performed by me because of the illimitability of my power." Does that sound reasonable? like the merciful God we serve? will God in this way make demands? we think not.

We are rational beings, and notwithstanding it is our duty to take God at His word, one of two

things must exist to enable us to love and admire God's acts. His acts must strike our comprehension according to our perception of justice and reason, or we must be deprived of just reasoning to enable us to rejoice over what we can not understand to be the work of reasonable justice.

Divine revelation informs us that in the beginning God created but one pair—Adam and Eve—that that pair was created in His own image and likeness, whatever that may imply, and by that pair was the world of mankind supplied. Can reason be made to place the divine acts above the common work of man, in justice to the divine dignity; that He made man in His own image and likeness, when a part of the product of creation has been cursed before created? for, from the seed of the created pair, the cursing as well as the blessing was inherited, and assigned that as the work of a wise Creator? Those who partook of the curse came from the seed created in His own image, as well as those who inherited the blessing. Was it reasonable that God should create in His own image, breathe in their nostrils His own spirit (the breath of life) those whom He had cursed from all eternity?

If it be asked, did He not know they would finally be cursed when He created them in His

own image and likeness? We answer, yes; God's knowledge being unlimited, He is not answerable to Himself (His attributes) therefor; but this may not be said of His acts.

This may be a new thought, as we have not heard it so expressed, but God answers to Himself for His acts. It is said, God can do everything, but that is scarcely reasonable. There are several things—speaking cautiously and reverentially—God can not do. He can not contradict Himself; He can not utter an untruth; He can not do evil. Some individuals think God does everything. If that be true, what do we do? What does Satan do? While there is no higher tribunal than God Himself, He limits Himself to things which are suitable to His dignity—to things which are true, things which are right, to things which are just; and this must be understood if we would have Him be our infallible Guide.

GOD'S WORK ABOVE REASONABLE CRITICISM.

There are individuals whose delight is to criticise any and everything brought within the reach of their vision—comprehensible or incomprehensible. While it is true no reasonable individual calls in question the acts of God—their

depth, width, and transcendent equity are the abiding motivity or preventive which removes them from the reach of critical reason—it is possible, however, that the vindicators of truth and righteousness, in their zeal, differ so greatly, that entanglements are brought about which misinterpret God's words and acts, and so place them in position to be called in question. Whether this is the work of foreordained plan or Satanic interposition, we are unable to decide. If foreordained plan, the wise Creator has with and before Him the object which will evidently meet His intention. If the interposition is of Satan, God will even in that case work the result to His own honor and glory.

While this is true, the expositors of divine truth ought to use their utmost endeavor to remove complications, entanglements, and questions which will destroy equanimity, notwithstanding God will ultimately subdue every disadvantage to His honor and glory. The servants of God ought not to make things crooked so that they may be straightened by Him who subdues all things unto Himself.

NO REASONABLE GROUND TO QUESTIONERS.

There are those who are willing to question

acts for the sake of questioning, and if expositors, in presenting the divine word, present to their auditors the work of men as the real acts of God, more than one evil is done at the same time. Complications and entanglements are produced, men and minds are brought into conflict, which generally results in division; and the greatest of all, the Giver of all good and perfect gifts is misrepresented. As it appears to us, Calvinistic predestination evidently accomplishes these to a great extent. Let us see.

Calvinistic predestination attempting to establish the unlimited will of God, in so doing, has made our benevolent Creator the sole cause of all human misery and woe, in time and in eternity; and uses no mistakable term in so doing. Aside from his positive definition of predestination, as God's determination to damn a part of mankind without even taking into account man's future intention or acts, he attributes holiness as the product of election; therefore sin, or unholiness, must be from the same source. Here are his words: "For when it is said, that the unfaithful are elected that they should be holy, it is fully implied, that the holiness they were in future to possess had its origin in election." Here the inference is plain, if without holiness no man can

see the Lord, and that is freely granted to certain individuals at election, those who remain in sin are not in that condition because of their free will nor desire, but because they were so placed at the time of election. One is elected to holiness, without any act of his, present or future; and the other to condemnation, without even a knowledge of his future thought or acts—the *will* of God.

Admitting that God's eternal *will* has unlimited sway—which it has—and is obligated to no one, accountable to none; shall that will sweep from the exalted throne of God righteousness, justice, mercy, and even His expressed love for those into whose nostrils He breathed the breath of life? God willed that His creatures sin, made them that they may sin, judges them for sinning, condemns them for being sinners, and will empty upon them His eternal vengeance because they are sinners. Notwithstanding the unlimited will of God, does that represent the Creator, Upholder, and Provider of the universe?

FREE GRACE.

There can be no doubt some of the things said in Calvinistic predestination are true, but the way they are put, places the responsibility on the wrong individual. For instance, nothing which

we receive is on merit, strictly speaking; for since one sin would destroy all merit, and all have sinned more than once, it is not possible to merit the grace or favor of God; therefore, every grace received is free—the gift of God. That is literally true. No man can purchase his way to God.

God, then, can give or withhold without becoming a debtor to any individual. He, no doubt, gives more to some than to others, without using what may be termed, partiality; because nobody deserves. We repeat, no one really merits God's favor from any one source or other, but there are those who in the midst of deserved wrath plead and obtain mercy, and plead for it from the source of eternal merit. They accept His offers and so obtain His free grace. Grace is free, and can not be obtained by merit, save in the merit of Him who merits it—Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God.

Then, this desire for mercy has a restrictive result, which though it can not merit, works similarly. God's mercy is free and can only be accepted as free, and in the acknowledgment of its reception and grateful recognition, its effect refrains from the commission of things which are grievous; and this in turn, increases the favor

and multiplies grace. This the evangelist St. John calls grace for grace—John 1: 16—“Of His fulness have we received, and grace for grace.” This is to say, as we receive grace it removes the barriers and supplies grace more abundantly.

Like the three servants who received the talents for trading, the two who enjoyed the privilege of trading, doubled the sum received; the one who rejected his privilege was deprived of that even which he had.

THE USED TALENTS AN ILLUSTRATION OF INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS.

If predestination is what Calvin tells us it is, certainly the wise Creator uses considerable space and time instructing His creatures the value of individual efforts, notwithstanding He knows individual efforts are valueless.

In the gospel of St. Matthew, we have the following parable—25: 14-30—“For *the kingdom of heaven* is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the

same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him,

Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Here we have given the entire quotation that it may be carefully examined.

Here the Saviour presents to us a parable which likens the acts of a certain man to the kingdom of heaven, or that the work of the kingdom of heaven is maintained under certain *regime*. This man called his servants and delivered unto them his goods, and no doubt, directed them to trade therewith. He gave them different amounts according to their several ability. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to the third one; and he positively remarked that their receipt was according to their ability; that is, their capacity to take care of what was given

them. Two did according to direction, but one otherwise.

Again, he called and reckoned with them. In reckoning, the first two reported that they had doubled the amount received—they were heartily commended. “Well done, good and faithful servant”, said he ; but, alas ! the third disregarded the instruction given—did nothing. His lord called him a wicked and slothful servant, commanded that the talent be taken from him and given to the one who had ten talents.

The Lord Jesus told His disciples that our Heavenly Father deals thus with His subjects. First, He gives them according to their several ability, and requires no more than their gifts afford. Secondly, He reckons with them. The one who had received the two talents, gained other two talents, and received similar plaudit as he who had gained five ; as being the equal of the one who received five talents, as far as his attainments and gifts were concerned ; yet he did not receive the same remuneration. The talent taken from the unprofitable servant was given to the one who had ten talents, and the doing thereof was noticeable. Some thought and expressed : “He hath ten talents.” The lord knew it, and Jesus so approved of his acts as to compare them

with the works of the kingdom of heaven. From this we perceive God's plan is, greater work, greater pay: the more effective work, the more may be expected.

CAN NOT REASONABLY BE APPLIED TO PREDESTINATION.

We suppose Calvinistic predestination can be made applicable to almost any case, but we doubt if it can so be done reasonably. Take for instance this case. Eight talents were divided among three individuals. One received five talents, another two, and the last one talent. The writer says, they received their talents according to their several ability, and they were doubtless instructed to trade with the amount received.

The first two receiving different amounts, doubled them; the last received the smallest amount, failed to make the necessary use thereof.

Their lord returned and reckoned with them, and all but the last gained one talent for each talent received, and received similar commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant"; but he who had hidden his lord's money was deprived of the amount he received and ordered into confinement—"Into outer darkness."

How did predestination affect those individ-

uals? or, how did it affect the man who hid his lord's money instead of putting it to the exchangers? Remember, the parable takes into account a case which happened or supposed to have happened—a natural case to illustrate a spiritual. How did predestination affect this case in its natural condition? Did predestination deprive the man who hid his lord's money of his ability to handle but a single talent? or did it affect him so that he was unable to use the one talent? or did it cause him to be dissatisfied with the one talent, so that he refused to trade therewith—to use it to advantage? or did it affect him in all of them?

If it affected him in either or all, his lord punished him not knowing that he did what he could and could do no more (hid the talent), therefore could not help what he did, though it was nothing. If he knew that he was helpless, could in nowise help himself, he would scarcely have punished him with confinement in “outer darkness”; and if he knew that he did all that was in his power to do, yet punished him because he did not what he could not do, his lord wronged him, evidently.

He cast him into “outer darkness” on a charge of omission—did not trade with his lord's money

—for no other reason than because he was deprived of the power to do otherwise—having no manner of control in the matter. That being true, would Jesus who knew he could not have done otherwise, having no power so to do, not merely approve of the punishment for not doing what He knew the man could not do, but publish to the world that the work of this lord is that of the Kingdom of Grace—punish an individual for what a sinful creature would scarcely be willing to do?

The world abounds in wickedness and wicked acts, but there is scarcely an individual who would be willing to condemn a fellow creature into utter or eternal darkness for not doing what he positively knew he was unable to do. A disposition that was created in the individual from eternity, and created without his intent, thought, or inclination—without any fault of his; how could the condemned suffer? By all intent and purposes such an individual is faultless, and no one can see how the faultless can suffer unless he does it in substitution.

Again, it was scarcely possible for the lord to have known the man he condemned did all he possibly could, for he was not allowed to do more from eternity—he was predestinated, but Jesus,

knowing all things, knew that he had gone to the extent of his power (though it was doing nothing) does not merely justify the seeming unjust suffering, but assures us that we will so be dealt with in the Kingdom of Grace; and that those who do not do what they can not do will be termed "wicked and slothful servants". Then saying to His apostles: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"—Mark 16: 15, 16; and again: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John 3: 16.

DISAGREEMENT.

Using Calvinistic predestination as the stand-points of Christian ethics, it is utterly impossible to see how the Kingdom of Heaven can be likened to the decision of the lord spoken of in this parable. For, first, if the man spoken of as having hidden his lord's money, did what he could not do otherwise, did he not do as well as the former two who gained a talent to each talent received? They simply did what they could, and he did the same; what more could be demanded in reason?

Did not Jesus highly commend the widow for doing all she could, though it was comparatively little? Did He not say she did "more than they all"? The "more than they all" was not in the amount she cast into the treasury, but in that she did all it was possible for her to do—"She cast in all the living that she had": it was impossible to do more.

Can it be conceived how legal punishment can be administered to an individual for having done all it was in his power to do, and especially when Jesus so highly commended one for having done the same thing? Is there not a plain disagreement of thought, idea, sentiment—truth? Can truth disagree with truth unless there is some misunderstanding, misstatement, misconstruction, or misinterpretation? Predestination is a Scriptural doctrine, no doubt; if it disagree with other Scriptural doctrines, and with itself, there must be misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

It will always be a thing impossible to produce reasonable agreement—consistent harmony—when the Scriptural doctrine of predestination bears the rigid interpretation placed upon it by Calvin. One truth is established thereby, the unlimited will of God; but the point it is made to reach places the truth in a false light. God will

not do wrong because He is at liberty to do it. Calvin carries this doctrine to such an extent until he confesses it to be "horrible"; and, on one occasion, his only way out of the dilemma, when convincing argument was brought to bear against the doctrine, he answered: "They" (the objectors) "inquire by what right the Lord is angry with His creatures who had not provoked him by any previous offence; for that to devote to destruction whom he pleases, is more like the caprice of a tyrant, than the lawful sentence of a judge. If such thoughts ever enter into the minds of pious men, they will be sufficiently enabled to break their violence by this one consideration, how exceedingly presumptuous it is, only to inquire into the causes of the divine *will*; which is, in fact, and is justly entitled to be, the cause of everything that exists. For if it has any cause, then there must be something antecedent on which it depends, which it is presumptuous to suppose. For the will of God is the highest rule of justice; so that what he wills must be considered just, for this very reason, because he wills it." Here it may be seen, Calvin places his interpretation of what he supposes to be God's will, as the will of God; and, therefore, calls it presumption to inquire there-

into: a rather pleasant way out of the difficulty. In another place he says, it is impious to inquire into what he said God is capable of doing; finally, he confesses the horribleness of what he termed the will of God. He says: "For since God foresees future events only in consequence of his decree that they shall happen, it is useless to contend about foreknowledge, while it is evident that all things come to pass rather by ordination and decree." Further he expresses: "It is a HORRIBLE DECREE, I confess; but no one can deny that God foreknew the future fate of man before he created him; and that he did foreknow it, because it was appointed by His own decree." "It is a HORRIBLE DECREE, I confess," says Calvin, and how he can associate the name of God with anything which appears "HORRIBLE" is a thing which is hard to be understood; yet he advises not to call in question what he terms the will of God. Nothing in the universe which can rightly be attributed to God ought to be termed *horrible*. The term is not applicable nor attributable to Him, His word, nor His work. We must certainly turn attention otherwise to find agreement and concord in dealing with the subject predestination, in the manner presented by Calvin, how God deals with His

creatures, how He justly judges and condemns them, and the manner He offers to them salvation.

ARMINIANISM VERSUS CALVINISM.

We think it advisable in attempting to give what plainly appears to be the reasonable Scriptural side of predestination, as we have given the Calvinistic side, to give the views of Calvin's chief opposer—Arminius.

The doctrine of latter day Arminianism, is not the doctrine taught by Arminius. Arminius was opposed to the doctrine taught by Calvin, chiefly in the declaration of the latter that predestination irretrievably damned from eternity certain individuals; while others were elected to eternal life; and neither because of what God knew would be their ultimate determination—all was done without cause, save the will of God.

The following is the doctrine touching predestination taught by Arminius: it may be summed up under five heads.

1. That God, from all eternity, determined to bestow salvation on those whom He foresaw would persevere unto the end in their faith in Christ Jesus; and to inflict everlasting punishment on those who should continue in their unbe-

lief, and resist unto the end His divine succours ; so that election was conditional, and reprobation in like manner the result of foreseen infidelity and persevering wickedness.

2. That Jesus Christ, by His sufferings and death, made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular ; that, however, none but those who believe in him can be partakers of the divine benefits.

3. That true faith cannot proceed from the exercise of our natural faculties and powers, nor from the force and operation of free will ; since man, in consequence of his natural corruption, is incapable either of thinking or doing any good thing ; and that, therefore, it is necessary, in order to his salvation, that he be regenerated and renewed by the operation of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ.

4. That this divine grace or energy of the Holy Ghost begins and perfects everything that can be called good in man, and consequently all good works are to be attributed to God alone ; that nevertheless, this grace is offered to all, and does not force men to act against their inclinations, but may be resisted and rendered ineffectual by the perverse wills of impenitent sinners.

5. That God gives to the truly faithful who are regenerated by His grace, the means of preserving themselves in this state; and Watson from whom this section is quoted—Biblical and Theological Dictionary, page 93—adds: “and though the first Arminians made some doubt with respect to the closing part of this article, their followers uniformly maintain, that the regenerate may lose true justifying faith forfeit their state of grace, and die in their sins.”

While it is true, early inclination has a deal to do with personal views, yet, where the primary desire is to be governed by the dictation of the voice of God, not merely the divine utterance but the divine intention can generally be discerned; and especially when there is a willingness to be taught, and a readiness to yield to the wooings of divine utterances, though it be not in line with the mere human conception.

Carefully considering the views of those two great writers—Calvin and Arminius—it can easily be seen that the views of Arminius and his followers appear more in harmony with Scripture declaration than those of Calvin; for the former is mild and reasonable in conclusion, moving very cautiously, prospectively and retrospectively—that is, looking forward and backward.

We say the views of Arminius ally more closely with Scripture reasoning, as they present the gracious Master as just and the Justifier of all who trust in the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

That the difference of views may be more accurately considered, we hereunto subjoin short quotations from three sources on the subject of predestination—Scripture, Calvin, and Arminius.

Scripture.

"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."—*Romans* 8:28-30.

Calvin.

"Predestination we call the eternal decree of God; by which he hath determined in himself what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or other of these ends, we say, he is predestinated, either to life or to death"—*Watson's Biblical and Theo. Dictionary*, page 195.

Arminius.

"That God, from all eternity, determined to bestow salvation on those whom he foresaw would persevere unto the end in their faith in Christ Jesus; and to inflict everlasting punishment on those who should continue in their unbelief, and resist unto the end his divine succours; so that election was conditional, and reprobation in like manner the result of foreseen infidelity and persevering wickedness.

2. That Jesus Christ, by his sufferings and death, made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular; that, however, none but those who believe in him can be partakers of the divine benefits: etc."—*Watson's Biblical and Theo. Dictionary*, page 93.

If it does not appear that Arminius gave special exposition to the passage so lustily laid hold on

by Calvin—we believe he has—it does not seem to be such a difficult task to observe the fact in the case: “‘God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.’ You see how he (the apostle) attributes both to the mere will of God. If, therefore, we can assign no reason why he grants mercy to his people but because such is his pleasure, neither shall we find any other cause but his will for the reprobation of others. For when God is said to harden, or show mercy on whom he pleases, men are taught, by this declaration, to seek no cause beside his will.” The same writer continues: “Many indeed, as if they wished to avert odium from God, admit election in such a way as to deny that anyone is reprobated. But this is puerile and absurd; because election itself could not exist, without being opposed to reprobation;—whom God *passes by he therefore reprobates*; and *from no other cause* than his determination to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestinates for his children.”

Some of the greatest mistakes made in explaining Scripture are made in not taking into consideration the peculiarity of Scriptural expressions. To be an expositor of God’s Word,

aside from learning, one must study the peculiarities of expressions, as well as its alphabet.

That God exercises more patience in the cases of some than others, there can be no doubt. That He does so, no one can reasonably complain; for He is under no obligation to exercise patience in any case. Notwithstanding, the presentation of His own righteousness exhibits justice. If patience were demanded, His forbearance one second would justify His righteous acts, and yet He withholds His righteous indignation again and again as an exhibition of His tender mercies toward the children of men.

Man's fallen nature places him where he can not act without divine assistance; that is, he can not perform any laudable act without God's aid. When he receives that assistance and fails to utilize it to his advantage, he is likely to forfeit it at any moment, and yet God will be just in His extension or non-extension.

When God ceases to exercise patience with any creature, He (God) withholds His aid, thus man is left inactive to good under any circumstance. Left without God's aid, he can do no good unless he receives His assistance. Withholding this aid is termed, "hardeneth". Sus-

pending special divine aid, the only incentive to right acts, the individual is hardened.

By "hardeneth" is generally understood that the dear Lord puts forth efforts, as the divine is capable, and so stops the individual from what he otherwise would do; but this is the result of inaction for reasons—God withholds His personal aid. With mistaken ideas it appears the individual is not to blame, because the wise Creator stops him from doing what he otherwise would have done. The fact is, as before stated, man can do nothing worthy of doing, unless the Spirit of God woos him so to do. If for reasons—stubbornness or depreciation—God refuses His continued aid (most likely because He sees it will not be appreciated) He withdraws the aid of His Spirit, and the individual is hardened; yet God is just in the exercise of His mercy. Paul expresses it more divinely, says—Romans 9: 22-24—"What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endure with long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory: Even so, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" Here it may be seen

Paul uses the term "endure with longsuffering" as the clear idea of God extending His mercy to whom He will.

We need not repeat, we have no legal claim on God. We are at His mercy, not on account of our creation, but our fallen condition. When our acts are so inconsistent as to obstruct His mercy, in the forfeiture we justly suffer the consequence. God hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and His will is not without reason—it is the will of the Supreme.

Here is an illustration. The devil and his companions sinned, and they were cast into the bottomless pit, never to be pardoned. Adam and his companion sinned, but they found mercy; and thus it may be said, God hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and that is true; but are there not reasons behind the mere expression? God works reasonably, and to find out His true reason we need to inquire humbly and earnestly—He generally exhibits His reason plainly enough to be conceived by an intelligent mind: one seeking to know. Remember, it must be kept in mind, He is under no obligation to give account to any, yet His acts are generally placed by the side of reason for the examination and patronage of His creatures.

There was a vast difference between the sin of Satan and that of Adam. They differed in two ways. Adam was tempted to sin by disobeying the commandment of his God, and tempted through the enmity of satan. Not merely was Satan jealous because of God's favor to man, but he was envious because of the favors Adam enjoyed; he (Satan) being debarred from God's favor. It was through hate and envy, therefore, Satan aimed his stroke to defeat God's providence as well as to deprive man of his prospects. Thus, man was tempted with evil intention; Satan was not.

Then again, Adam sinned in disobeying the voice of his God, and that was a terrible sin. He ate of the fruit of the tree which God forbade him to eat, and did it because he was deceived by Satan.

Satan's sin was very different. He was not tempted, save by the evil which crept into his nature by unseemingly ambition, which the exercise of reason might have clearly demonstrated his inability to carry into effect successfully. Satan attempted to rob God of His throne, of His honor, His glory, His government—of universal dominion. He attempted to displace God by self-substitution.

Satan's crime was not the failure of a mistaken

or naughty child, such as children often make—such as was Adam's; it was a case of Absalom seeking David's kingdom and David's life. Nothing short of Absalom's death would have guaranteed David's safety. The safety of his kingdom, of his household, the safety of his life. Absalom must die, or David must live dying—in fear of: Absalom died.

To some extent, this was the case of Satan's transgression. He sought the government of God, His honor and glory, and all that was therewith connected. Since neither could die—God nor Satan—Satan must be cast out. There was no error in Satan's sin, save the wickedness which crept into his nature and constituted eternal wrong.

Individuals may sin in such a way as to demand vengeance, and nothing but vengeance. Like Satan, they may destroy the bridge over which mercy passes, therefore, the pouring out of vengeance upon such an individual is not merely just, but a just demand.

If there be no past nor future with God—and there is none—certainly His dealing from eternity for eternity (to us) is very present with Him; why then would He not consign Absalom to die, in justice (aside

from His will) for the safety of David, a man after God's own heart? He consigned Satan to the pit of destruction for the safety of His throne; He did the same to Absalom for the safety of David's throne. All of these had the pleasure of the will of God, but His will binds itself with reason attributable to the divine mind. To God's creatures it would be very unfortunate, if the Divine Being used no other attribute in the distribution of reward and punishment than His will—notwithstanding His will has no limit—if it took for its way Calvin's view of predestination.

We repeat what we have often stated, primarily there is no goodness in man, and admitting he can not of himself merit God's favor, without the help of God, there is, notwithstanding a secondary merit in good works. That is to say, where good works are coupled with or attached to the merits of Christ, though they have no merit in themselves alone, present claims which are never turned away without God's notice.

This Jesus declared to the rich young ruler who inquired: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest

the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, one thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."

If work has nothing to do with salvation, why did Jesus direct him to work for the perfecting of his salvation, when the young man inquired: "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? why did Jesus refer him to the commandments: "Thou knowest the commandments"? Then, it may be noticed that when this young man confessed that he kept the commandments from his youth up. "Jesus beholding him loved him:" why did Jesus love him? was it not for his confessed good works?

With but little studying this passage, one can easily see that keeping the commandments brought this young man in favor with Christ, but the Master was sorry for him when he was not

able to go the full journey; to sell all he had and give to the poor, and to take up the cross and follow Him. It plainly appears that work has to do with man's salvation, while it is not primary in the situation. We repeat what we stated in a former chapter, James challenged any one to show his faith without his work.

If predestination is merely the exercise of God's will, independent of what has been, is being done, and will be done, what virtue can there be in good works? and why try to make what is best better? Why so much preaching to abstain from evil and do good? why so many efforts have been and are being made in lifting up the standard of virtue and good deeds?—why make so much ado over what is really nothing? But God does nothing without significance.

HOW THE SITUATION IS MADE TO APPEAR.

Does it not appear that there are certain principles in man which need nurturing, that they may meet the divine demand? Why do we go to the pulpit and urge men—vehemently urge them—to accept the offered mercies of God while it is called today? Do we really mean to offer what we know they can not accept, knowing those who accept can not help accepting? If this is

what we mean, why not make our statement so to be understood—the truth can not hurt in such a case: whatever is to be will be.

Preachers of the gospel declare to men they ought to come to God and be saved; that they can if they will. It seems, even imperceptibly, the will of man has something to do with his salvation, if not true, why the statement? Both Arminians and Calvinists urge this demand upon the ungodly; but Calvinistic predestination declares, nothing can reach the man who is cursed from all eternity; and a number of individuals are cursed: nothing can defeat the election—good nor bad. Those who believe that God's will has all to do with the matter, naturally believe one thing and urge another; for supposing that man's will has to do with his salvation, that is the only ground one has in urging him to come to Christ and be saved.

If we could make ourselves believe that man's will has nothing to do with his salvation, it would be impossible for us to preach a conscientious sermon, offering salvation to the unsaved, since we could not help believing it useless; for he could not accept unless God willed it; neither could he refuse if God willed it; neither would it be necessary to accept if God willed it.

CHAPTER IV.

CHILDREN—THEIR SALVATION.

When we view, dispassionately, Calvinistic predestination, we behold, as a natural consequence, one of its unfortunate fruits—the damnation of innumerable children; some, no doubt, never saw, in their bodies, the light of nature.

This doctrine positively declares that God's dealing with the salvation of mankind, has nothing to do with what the creature may or may not do. That God does not use His knowledge—to us, foreknowledge—as a cause for His decision in predestinating souls for happiness or misery. Here is the substance of what He did: "I will that these shall be saved—shall go to heaven; and that those shall be lost—shall go to hell:" and so it was done.

Calvin radically condemned taking into account the knowledge of God (by us termed foreknowledge), what will really come to pass. Here



are Calvin's words: "Though it is sufficiently clear, that God in His secret counsel, freely chooses whom He will, and rejects others, his gratuitous election is but half displayed till we come to particular individuals, to whom God not only offers salvation, but *assigns* it in such a manner that the certainty of the effect is liable to no suspense or doubt." He continues: "In conformity, therefore, to the clear doctrine of the Scripture, we assert, that by an eternal and immutable counsel, God hath once for all determined both whom he would admit to salvation, and whom he would condemn to destruction. We affirm that this counsel, as far as concerns the elect, is founded on his gratuitous mercy, totally irrespective of human merit; but that to those whom he devotes to condemnation the gate of life is closed by a just and irreprehensible, but incomprehensible judgment." Calvin then condemns the conclusion that God works in accordance with his knowledge of things to come, says: "It is a notion commonly entertained, that God, foreseeing what would be the respective merits of every individual, makes a correspondent distinction between different persons; that he adopts as his children such as he foreknows will be deserving of his grace; and devotes to damnation

of death others, whose dispositions he sees will be inclined to wickedness and impiety. Thus they not only obscure election by covering it with the veil of foreknowledge, but pretend that it originates in another cause." To carry out his ideas, he then quotes the words of the apostle; says: "'God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.' You see how he (the apostle) attributes *both* to the *mere will* of God. If, therefore, we assign no reason why he grants mercy to his people but because such is his pleasure, neither shall we find any other cause but *his will* for reprobation of others. For when God is said to harden, or show mercy to whom he pleases, men are taught, by this declaration, to seek *no cause beside his will*. He continues: "Many indeed, as if they wish to avert odium from God, admit election in such a way as to deny that any one is reprobated. But this is puerile and absurd; because election itself could not exist, without being opposed to reprobation;—whom God passes by he therefore reprobates; and from no other cause than his determination to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestinates for his children."—Book III., Chapter 23.

All must admit, an individual who has not

committed any act, or whose acts, good or bad, shall not be taken into account for credit nor discredit, stands before his Maker in the same attitude of an innocent child—he has committed no act, and what he may or may not commit is not taken into account. He has to his charge no act, good nor bad, for nor against him. This is the condition of a child, during its childhood. If God, in His distribution of merit or demerit, refuses to consider what may or will be; man stands before his Maker in the attitude of innocence; and any consignment in that attitude—taking no future act into consideration—to happiness or misery, falls upon him in a state of innocence. Unless the guilt is taken into consideration before the assignment, and he be assigned accordingly; no sin committed thereafter could reasonably be considered as justification for his condemnation.

Any doctrine which declares, the innocent is cursed because it is the will of God so to do, does more than misrepresent our benevolent Father—it does more! It reaches and condemns children, for all persons are innocent until they become guilty, and since condemnation was passed upon them in their innocence, not taking into account what they will or will not do; then,

an innumerable host of children must of necessity fall under the curse or condemnation—because no future is taken into consideration, says Calvin: neither, whether he will live or die young or old, or whether he will accept or reject the overtures of mercy. Children, too, are condemned.

There could be but one way to rescue children from condemnation, notwithstanding their innocence (but it makes no difference since others also are condemned without imputation), and that is, to conclude that God in His assignment had before Him future happenings—knowledge or foreknowledge, as it may be termed. Is it reasonable to conclude otherwise? for this is of necessity, unless God has a way to suspend His knowledge of what He really knows: that information has not been revealed to us, and we do not know that it is profitable to inquire into.

Calvinistic predestination declares, that God in predestinating the human race for time and eternity acted independently of His knowledge—we can not say future nor foreknowledge, for there is no future with Him—consigned, not for evil which will be done, but passed sentence of condemnation upon the innocent because it was His will so to do. So then, it concludes, as a consequence, that God condemned to the pit of de-

struction billions and billions of children; millions of them, in the body, never saw the light of nature. That does not seem to be a very pleasant feature of any doctrine assigning such a design to our wise Creator. No wonder Calvin himself confessed it a HORRIBLE DECREE. Horrible is its rightful characteristic, but we object to its being attributed as a part of the work of God.

Not merely by argument, but Calvinistic predestination admit the possibility of children falling under the malediction of condemnation for no other reason than the will of God exhibited in predestination. Then he says to us, we ought not to call this doctrine into question, because it is the divine will, and whatever He wills or does is right. We frankly admit the last, but not the first. We admit what God does is right, but how can we justly admit that God's will is capable of consigning billions of innocent children to the place of eternal torment, when Christ tells us, of that class of individuals: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven; and, unless ye be converted and become as little children, ye can not enter the kingdom of heaven."

CAUSE OF CHRIST'S LOVE FOR CHILDREN.

It was not the size of a child which caused Christ to love it. It was loved for its innocence

and simplicity, in contradistinction to man's duplicity. God is a lover of purity, because it is the leading attribute of His nature. Purity was the chief point, in the image of God, in which man was created.

Moral purity can only be found in moral beings. There is a purity of water, a purity of air, a purity of sunbeams; but neither of these is a tint of moral purity. No matter what form in which purity is seen, in that condition it attracts the admiration of God and heaven. It is in accordance with the nature of things, like attracts like—purity attracts purity. Wherever purity is, the divine is to be found.

Go to the cradle and behold a lovely babe cooing and gurgling, all in smiles, with beaming eyes and the appearance of divine innocence—angelic purity; whoever has been touched with the divine essence can but love such an one.

Christ was and is a lover of purity, therefore, He loved children; and in evidence of that fact, whenever an opportunity presented itself, He would embrace the little ones, bless them, set them before Him, in the presence of His disciples, and declare if the disciples would become great they must first partake of the nature of those little ones. If they would enter into the

kingdom of heaven, they must be changed and become as little children. Christ loved children because of the purity of their natures.

The whole nature corrupted by sin, must be renewed by grace divine; thus be made to regain the purity once enjoyed in childish innocence; for though they were born in sin, Christ's substitution imputed to them their innocence—in them, there was no actual sin. Christ loved them because they were then in their purity; and, no doubt, He often felt grieved for them, as He knew the time was approaching when their innocence would pass from them; and pass from some forever!

CHILDREN IN THE TERM OF SALVATION.

There are persons who refuse to admit the legality of substitution. Substitution, however, is not merely commonly admitted, but is a part of practical and constitutional economy. Great Britain, the United States, and other governments are known in different countries by representatives—ambassadors, consuls, ministers plenipotentiary, etc. Representatives in representing their governments, transact legal business in the name of the governments which they represent, sign documents, agreements, etc., for their re-

spective governments with as much authority as if they did it for themselves. This is substitution.

It was this substitution which brought about the means of salvation for men, women, and children; and substitution is a daily practice. Soldiers, under similar circumstance, go on guard in place of their comrades, and when governments are drafting or pressing men into military service, often one man goes as a substitute for another, and is accepted as such.

In various ways substitutions are not only accepted but legally recognized. Any man who has collaterals, if he so desire, can assume the responsibility of paying a debt for another, and in many cases not merely acceptable, but gladly accepted.

From Scriptural authority we obtain the recognized plan of salvation: the God-man dies a natural death to save the race of mankind from dying the eternal death. Christ died as a substitute for all, and He declared Himself: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." It is out of the province of reason to conceive that Christ would deceive any individual, and He declares positively that the intention of His death was to draw all men unto Him—all

individuals; and this included children. None would be lost but those who knowingly resist the drawing.

While this substitution is for all, it is not efficacious to those who can but refuse to accept on its terms. The plain explanation is, the death of Christ atoned for three classes of sins: First, Original Sins—the perilous condition into which we were placed by Adam and Eve. Second, The Sins Committed In A State of Irresponsibility—children before they reach the years of puberty, idiots, etc. Third, The Sins Of Those Who Accepted Salvation On The Terms Of The Gospel. As will be more clearly demonstrated hereafter, the sufferings and death of Christ atoned for children, and so for irresponsibles.

CHILDREN'S SALVATION.

There can be no doubt, one of the causes of careless and irregular actions of men may be traced to the misapprehension of God in His true characteristics. God tortures no man. When torturing is done, it will be found that man tortures himself. To keep him from the place of torture God warns man from the height above and from the depth beneath to shun the path of death which never dies. When it is said

man dies the eternal death for nothing more than the gratification of the unlimited will of God, independent of man's evil desires and acts, he is relieved of all responsibility of omission or commission; and not being responsible for his acts—they are the will of God—man commits innumerable actual sins and often lives the life of a reprobate, concluding it will be all the same under any circumstance.

It takes no philosopher nor any extraordinary amount of wisdom nor intelligence to perceive that while God is under no obligation to any individual for acts performed by Him; that He might be just, and the Justifier of acts in equity, His own acts must surely wear the ring of common justice in such proportion that the eyes of His creatures may behold and realize their consistency. If for no other purpose, for the sake of example, since He is the only true and perfect model.

Paul in the spirit of inspiration declares—II. Corinthians 5: 10—"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"; and he continues—verse 11—"Knowing

therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

There are millions of children who have done deeds in the body for which they are not accountable, and there are other millions which have done no deed at all in the body—all died. One has done, the other has not done. One has had no chance to do, and the other has had no chance to become responsible for what he has done—they have died.

It is but reasonable that divine justice charges neither, since neither is responsible—both irresponsible. If we take Calvin's idea of predestination, notwithstanding the fact attained, in spite of the peculiar existing circumstances, a number of either or both must fall victims to the foreordained decision: "eternal life", or "eternal damnation"; fault or no fault being taken into consideration: sin or no sin, draws the conclusion; knowledge of facts to be, not being called in question.

The Scripture just quoted gives us better information. It tells us, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." From the word of Scripture, the doer is respon-

sible; Calvin would make us feel he is not, so far as he acts as a tool without his choice. If he has anything to do in the matter, it would be for aiding and abetting; and then, that is done without the possibility of leaving it undone.

Fancy with yourselves—The great judgment day has appeared, and the universe is gathered before God. There are millions and millions of innocent children who never committed a wilful sin, and many have never committed a sin, because they have never beheld the light of nature in the body. These innocent ones are gathered together at the bar of God, mingled with the innumerable throng. Fancy you hear the Judge of all the earth exclaim: “You, millions of infants, you have committed no sin, none at all, but it has been my will from eternity that a part of mankind shall be lost, and it happens you fell over the line. You are damned because it is my will—and so it shall be. You shall go away into everlasting punishment: I willed it.” How would judgment of that kind impress you? Nay, friends; the God we serve is not a god of that order, of that inclination, nor proclivity—declivity would be a better word than proclivity.

Children are saved in the covenant of grace.

There is a covenant of work; the terms are: Do and live; Sin and die. This covenant can be made only with individuals comprehending consequences.

Then, there is the covenant of grace or redemption. This covenant was entered into by the Divine Three—The Trinity—and took into consideration those on whom grace and glory were concluded. Those who had not the faculty, or having the faculty trusted in Christ, the eternal Source, for salvation through the redemptive scheme.

Children's salvation, therefore, derives from the Source of the covenant of grace—the sacred Covenantors.

If destruction will have its own, it will claim those only who yield to its delusion. The idea of salvation to the uttermost is deeper, broader, and higher than is often apprehended. Christ saves all whom circumstances and situation place in the reach of mercy to rightly control in the deal without disregarding divine justice. All of whom He can say; I have saved them because they trusted and acknowledged me; I have saved them on account of their immature condition, and not being able to trust me, I trust them. I lost

those because they refused to trust and acknowledge me. They loved and preferred death and so obtained it. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the saved into life eternal. Children are saved in the covenant of grace.

CHAPTER V.

GOD HAS NO DESIRE IN MAN'S DESTRUCTION.

It is certainly impossible for God to lie, and that fact is made manifest by His nature and character; and has been positively declared by the word of His mouth. Saint Paul says in his letter to his Hebrew brethren—Hebrews 6: 18, 19—“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.” We assert it is not possible for God to make a statement which is not pre-eminently true.

We scarcely understand Calvin when he tells us: “In conformity, therefore, to the clear doctrine of the Scripture, we assert, that by an eternal and immutable counsel, God hath once for all determined both whom he would

admit to salvation, and whom he would condemn to destruction. We affirm", said he, "that this counsel, as far as concerns the elect, is founded on his gratuitous mercy, totally irrespective of human merit; but that to those whom he devotes to condemnation, the gate of life is closed by a just and irreprehensible, but *incomprehensible* judgment."

Unless we are very much mistaken, the above quotation certainly disagrees with the word of revelation: let us see. We quote—Ezekial 33: 11—"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" But, further, the Lord speaking by the mouth of the same prophet says—Ezekiel 18: 19-25—"Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the

wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?"

That the Scriptural account of predestination admits ambiguity, there can be no doubt; from the fact, good, wise, and learned men have greatly differed in their views on that subject; and that furnishes evidence that there is something ambiguous thereabout.

Ambiguity is not always in a word, sometimes it may be discerned in sentences. The word

ambiguity indicates that a word or sentence is liable to more than one construction—more than one meaning; and that such men as Pelagius and Augustine, Calvin and Arminius, and their numerous followers, differed so widely in their construction of this doctrine, indicates its ambiguity.

When a document has been written by any individual, and his declarations appear ambiguous, the proper person to whom appeals are presented for decision is, the writer of the document. His explanation, as to what he intended to convey in his declarations, is of more value than all others, and with good reason. One individual may say the writer meant one thing, and another, other things; but there is the writer, what sayest thou? Thou art the arbiter of the whole matter—decide. All must be silent when he speaks. No person of judgment will be bold enough to pretend to know better what the writer had in mind when he expressed himself as he did, than the writer himself.

But, it might be the writer is dead, and has made no written nor verbal statement in explanation of the ambiguous or controverted expression. In such an event, the views of the highest and best authority may be admitted. But it may be

that the writer of the document, though not present, has written extensively on the same and similar subjects. It is natural that consultation of his writings on the subject must be of more legal value than the opinions of the wisest or best informed.

There is something more than ordinary in divine utterances. In them, the Scripture of divine truth, we are furnished with utterances and extra-utterances. That is to say, the Scripture generally repeats itself, or explains itself. When it does not repeat itself, anything of mysterious character remains as such, as then it seems to be the intention of Providence not to clearly express Himself.

Scripture repeating itself occasionally makes statements which seem contradictory to another or others. In such a case the Scripture ought to be carefully searched until the agreement is found, before any definite conclusion is publicly uttered; for all seeming contradictions have only that appearance: their agreement may be found with care. Remember, Scripture is divine utterances, and God never contradicts Himself.

We are now on our thirty-first perusal of the Holy Scripture, and the more frequently we go over the same thing, the more beautiful is the appearance of its harmony. The greatest har-

mony is discerned by musicians by the frequency of repetition: great musicians never tire of repetition—John 5: 39—“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: And they are they which testify of me.”

AUTHOR *versus* EXPOSITOR.

God has not left Himself without verified testimonies as to His extraordinary love for the human family—mankind in general; and if nothing affirms and confirms the manifested fact, the gift of His only begotten Son to suffer and die for the race, more than expresses unbounded love—“Love beyond degree.”

Again, He has not left us to wonder if the gift of His Son to suffer and die may be termed love, but told us: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Notwithstanding this divine declaration, Calvin in his exposition of God’s Word, thought he discovered from certain expressions, that God’s wonderful love manifested itself in the fact that forasmuch as all men sinned and were liable to eternal death, God willed that certain individuals shall be saved, and others lost during the ages of eternity; and that therein God showed

His wonderful love to man. Calvin tells us: "Many, indeed, as if they wished to avert odium from God, admit election in such a way as to deny that anyone is reprobated." He says: "But this is puerile and absurd; because election itself could not exist, without being opposed to reprobation;—whom God *passes by he therefore reprobates*; and *from no other cause* than his determination to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestinates for his children"—"For no other cause than because he *wills* it." This is Calvin's conclusion of the matter of God's acts and intention in relation to predestination.

As we have no desire to force a conclusion on the doctrine of predestination, we desire to have God speak for Himself, and at the same time give a chance to Calvin and his coadjutors to speak for themselves. God is not dead, and can not die, but since He does not speak otherwise than through revelation, let us turn to revelation and hear His gentle but positive declaration. He has spoken extensively on all subjects, but especially concerning salvation—salvation of the human family. Rather than argue for a point, we will put His declaration on either side of those of Calvin's interpretation. Let us give attention to their declarations. From them we give the reader a chance to draw his own conclusions.

Scripture.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."—*Romans 8: 29, 30.*

"(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to his election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth he yet find fault? For

Calvin.

"Predestination we call the eternal decree of God; by which he hath determined in himself what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or other of these ends, we say, he is predestinated, either to life or to death."

"In conformity, therefore, to the clear doctrine of the Scripture, we assert, that by an eternal and immutable counsel, God hath once for all determined both whom he would admit to salvation, and whom he would condemn to destruction. We affirm that this counsel, as far as concerns the elect, is founded on his gratuitous mercy, totally irrespective of human merit; but that to those whom he devotes to condemnation, the gate of life is closed by a just and irreprehensible, but *incomprehensible* judgment. * * * As God seals his elect by vocation and justification, so by *excluding* the reprobate from the knowledge of his name, and sanctification of his Spirit, he affords another indication of judgment that awaits them."—*Chapter 21, Book III.*

"If, therefore, we can assign no reason why he grants mercy to his people but because such is his pleasure, neither

Scripture.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—*John 3: 14-16.*

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."—*Revelation 22: 17.*

"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?"—*Ezekiel 18: 23.*

"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"—*Ezekiel 33: 11.*

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my

Scripture—Cont'd.

who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endureth with longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles."—*Romans 9: 11-24.*

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us acceptable in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence."—*Ephesians 1: 5-8.*

Calvin—Cont'd.

shall we find any other cause but his will for the reprobation of others. For when God is said to harden or show mercy on whom he pleases, men are taught, by this declaration, to seek no other cause beside his will.—*Book III, Chapter 23.*

Zanchius and Piscator, Calvin's coadjutors—

"Reprobates", says Zanchius, "are compelled with the necessity of sinning, and so of perishing, by this ordination of God; and so compelled that they cannot choose but sin and perish."

(2) "God works all things in all men, not only in the godly, but also in the ungodly."

(3) Piscator declares: "Judas could not but betray Christ, seeing that God's decrees are immutable; and whether a man bless or curse, he always doth it necessarily in respect of God's providence, and in so doing he doeth always according to the will of God."

(4) "It doth or at least may appear from the word of God, that we neither can do more good than we do, nor omit more evil than we omit; because God from eternity hath precisely decreed that both (the good and the evil) should be done. It is fatally constituted when, and how, and how much, every one of us ought to study and love piety, or not to love it."

Scripture—Cont'd.

statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die."—*Ezekiel 18: 20, 21.*

"So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."—*Ezekiel 33: 7-9.*

"If the wicked man turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby."—*Ezekiel 33: 19.*

"Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."—*Ezekiel 18: 27.*

GOD EXPLAINS HIMSELF BETTER THAN ANOTHER.

No matter how well informed a person may be, he can not know God's mind better than God knows it Himself. When, therefore, we produce the views of Calvin and his coadjutors, exhibiting and explaining the meaning of God's word, it is not possible for their declaration to stand when it does not harmonize with the utterance of God touching the same and similar subjects; unless we are willing to admit that these well informed men understand God better than He does Himself.

Calvin tells us, that predestination is God's determination to save a part of mankind, and to damn the remainder; and that the part damned is condemned without any fault of its own: that this condemnation is done by the will and pleasure of God Himself.

Jesus Christ declares to us through His Gospel: "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"—John 3: 15; and repeats Himself in the next verse—John 3: 16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

In the Revelation—22: 17—God uses this same

whosoever, says: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And *whosoever* will, let him take the water of life freely."

There is evidence that there is something in the word "*whosoever*"—"Whosoever believeth in him should not perish"; "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish"; repeated in two successive verses: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." If "*whosoever*" has any meaning at all, it is intended to give choice to any individual; but how could this be, if Calvin's views are correct? What individual *will* would have to do in the matter, except God's will? Whom must we believe, in this or any other case? Calvin or God?—no answer is required.

But Calvin declares it is not merely the will but pleasure of God that part of mankind shall be lost; that God willed it, and it will be His pleasure to carry out His *will*. Holy Scripture condemns that declaration by the mouth of the Prophet Ezekiel—18: 23—"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?" The last quotation seems as though it was intended to meet the declaration of Calvin.

The real intention of interrogatory declarations is, their unanswerableness; but lest there be some doubt in the matter, the Master repeats Himself in another place in the declarative, says—Ezekiel 33: 11—"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

In this declaration, God makes Calvin's irreprehensible but incomprehensible judgment, more than incomprehensible in regard to the matter of which he wrote; so that instead of *excluding* the reprobates—according to his saying—it excludes his argument. Here God speaks for Himself, declares He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, urges him to turn from his wickedness and live. The blessed Master gives undoubted evidence that Calvin did not understand His assertion in relation to predestination—no matter how good his intention may have been.

It proves, also, that Paul's declaration of Esau serving Jacob (the elder serving the younger, contrary to Jewish custom) was intended to prove God's displeasure of sin and depreciation

of privileges, as God saw them, which brought the curse on Esau and on Pharaoh.

That God is under no obligation to extend mercy at any time, there can be no question, so when the extension is depreciated, He abridges, as seems good and compatible with His wisdom; but that does not show that He is capable of acting contrary to reason, notwithstanding He has power so to do; for while He is under no obligation to give account for His acts to any individual, He varies not to hold Himself to the line of justice prescribed by His almighty wisdom. He would do nothing less as a perfect example.

CALVIN'S COADJUTORS—ZANCHIUS AND PISCATOR.

It is not such a hard thing to catch a wrong idea, and it is an easier thing to make a false impression; and when such an impression is once made it is likely to increase in weight and volume. The danger of making a false impression ought to be eagerly and cautiously watched, more especially touching the work of man's salvation.

Take for example, two of Calvin's followers—Zanchius and Piscator. Calvin is explicit in his declarations, yet cautious in expressing himself. So much so that he leaves some things to be in-

ferred; but this is not the case with either of the before mentioned disciples.

Dr. Thomas Pierce published an able and very interesting pamphlet, entitled: "A Correct Copy Of Some Notes Concerning God's Decree"; and he named as two of the individuals who wrote on the decrees of God in predestination, Zanchius and Piscator.

The following are the two propositions of Zanchius:

(1). "Reprobates are compelled with a necessity of sinning, and so of perishing, by this ordination of God; and so compelled that they can not choose but sin and perish."

(2). God works all things in all men, not only in the godly, but also in the ungodly."

The next two are those of Piscator:

(3). "Judas could not but betray Christ, seeing that God's decrees are immutable; and whether a man bless or curse, he always doth it necessarily in respect of God's providence, and in so doing he doeth always according to the will of God."

(4). "It doth or at least may appear from the word of God, that we neither can do more good than we do, nor omit more evil than we omit; because God from eternity hath precisely decreed

that both (the good and the evil) should so be done. It is fatally constituted when, and how, and how much, every one of us ought to study and love piety, or not to love it."

As we calmly and reverently discuss what appears to us as errors of great and good men, we do not attempt to bring a railing accusation against either of them, but quote their words representing their side of this important question; then, we present God's own word with no other desire than the advancement of truth to the detriment of error.

Zanchius tells us that sinners are compelled to sin, and can not otherwise than continue, as it is not possible for them to escape perishing; that it is so ordained of God: they can not do otherwise. That this is the way God deals with godly and ungodly—neither has any choice of his own. This seems to be Calvin's idea, but he is more cautious in his expressions.

Such declarations present as a fact, that the lost sinner strictly obeys God, as much as he who is saved with an everlasting salvation. That as to obedience, the godly and ungodly alike obey God and so fulfil the intention of His providence. Zanchius' expression is so explicit, not to say

daring, that he can scarcely demand the respect of reason which Calvin commands and retains.

Zanchius by his declaration asserts one of two things: there is no such thing as transgression—if transgression means violation of law—in the universe; or, if there be transgression, then, God is the transgressor;—man is only the tool in carrying out the divine will. In this sense, there can be no sin through disobedience.

We know there are transgressions by reason of disobedience, and that has ever been acknowledged commencing in the Garden of Eden. We know this fact by the exercise of reason; we know it by experience; we know it by the declaration of God. Let God speak for Himself—I. Samuel 15: 22—"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Samuel said to Saul: "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."—I. Samuel 15: 23. If Saul really obeyed the Lord, in going contrary to His commandment, because he could not do otherwise; he really obeyed the Lord: how then could the accusation be true?

But Piscator is as bold and pointed as Zan-

chius, if not more so. He says: "Judas could not but betray Christ, seeing that God's decrees are immutable; and whether a man bless or curse, he always doth it necessarily in respect of God's providence, and in so doing he doeth always according to the will of God." This leaves nothing to be inferred, but positively makes God the Author of all sin, as it is His will that men should curse as well as bless. He tells us that fatality is, "When, and how, and how much"; and closes his declaration by nonsensically saying: "Every one of us ought to study and love piety, or not love it."

We scarcely think the word of God ought to be used in contradiction of such statements—they contradict themselves. We quote them to show to what an unreasonable extent Calvinistic predestination reaches. We are sure many persons who assert their belief in Calvinistic predestination are not acquainted with its length, breadth, and depth. To say God does every thing, and Satan does nothing is saying too much.

SYNOD OF DORT.

One more reference then we proceed to our closing chapter. We refer to the conclave entitled the Synod of Dort.

In 1618-19, a number of Protestant ministers

met in conclave in the noted town of Dort, about twelve miles southeast of Rotterdam, South Holland; for the purpose of condemning what seemed to them the heretical doctrine of Arminius—the Whosoever Will Doctrine.

That synod affirmed the doctrine of Calvin and his coadjutors, and condemned the calm and thoughtful system of Arminius. History tells us, that the Gothic building in which this synod sat, and whose marvellous labors, according to the president of the synod, in his closing address; “made hell tremble”, is now used as a public house; and the particular room in which the synod met is degraded into a dancing saloon.

Even when we have occasion to believe we are right, it is reasonable to be calm and modest, for it is positively declared—James 4: 6—“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” Rashness and boasting are the real signs of weakness. The man who appears to be exasperated when he is accused, is generally guilty.

The salvation of the gospel is a “whosoever will” salvation, and if it were not so, the gospel of Jesus Christ would be as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal—it would have no meaning whatever. The gospel is true, offers life, and is full of hope—praise God.

CHAPTER VI.

REVIEW.

In closing this small volume, we desire to review calmly the subject in discussion, and if the Holy Spirit will help us—we believe He will—we will try to bring point to point, and show that notwithstanding the mistaken view held by predestinarians; Predestination is a Scriptural doctrine; and where it is watched with a single eye—in humble submission; the object of predestination is the central point of salvation. If the index finger be carefully watched, it will be seen pointing toward Christ, the eternal Source and only Door to salvation—not to man; as we pointed out in a previous chapter.

CENTRAL POINT OF PREDESTINATION.

We mentioned in a previous chapter, in order to a thorough understanding of the declarations of God, several things are indispensably necessary. We must understand God well enough to

be conversant with the manner of His expressions—we must be thoroughly acquainted with the alphabet leading to His mode of utterances; and this may not be obtained in a day nor a year, except in cases of special endowment.

One of the real obstructions to obtaining salvation is, the simplicity of its offer and the mode of acceptance; and the enemy uses that feature for all that it is worth. Satan tries to show persons that as the Lord is a great God, His power almighty, His wisdom incomprehensible, and His working mysterious; so is His mode of distributing salvation. Hence, there are those who are not willing to take His simple word or promise for all which are therein expressed. But few persons are willing to look and live, and to do this for no other reason than because God so declares; yet, that is all which is indispensably necessary. Believe in Him and have eternal life; continue that belief, and it becomes trusting; and trusting produces its accompanying work. All comes from the starting point, simplicity—Thou sayest, I believe. That is too simple for the millions. They desire to find the fact by complicated processes—reason it out.

Reason is excellent and commendable, and yet though a noted guide, it is not infallible; for

mind can not always find the trackless path of the mighty God of Jacob—yet He is reasonable. There are times when His wisdom is too wonderful for man, yet He is never unreasonable. In His wisdom He goes out farther and farther, and yet farther, until horizon on neither side is conceivable: yet onward He goes! In such cases we can but hurry back to nature's limits and cry: "We have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ears, but seeing we have lost sight of Thee."

We repeat, that we may see God more correctly, we must approach reverently and steadfastly behold in simplicity. Naaman could not be healed of his leprosy until he admitted the efficacy of the simple remedy recommended from the mouth of God's prophet: "Wash and be clean." Why, cold water bath kills the leper—yes, that is true, but this is God's message. He obeyed and was healed.

In the case of man's salvation, from the Alpha to the Omega, Christ is the revealed Door. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."—John 10: 9. In the matter of predestination, Christ has not yielded this position one-

thousandth part of an inch; nay, He stands out more pre-eminently.

Man having lost his created image—the image of his God—to be saved, he must renew it; and this is God's prescription, in settling his (man's) destiny—"To be conformed to the image of his Son." This is as though God said, You were created in our image and in our likeness, but you have lost it; I decree you can not enter into rest unless you renew it in the image of my Son—conformed to the image of His Son.

SCRIPTURE PROOFS.

Bear with us as we present Scriptural evidences to sustain our assertions, for we dare not assume to walk in strange paths without the divine sanction; and we do this with the full knowledge of our liability to err, but God's word can not err.

It is true, reading Paul's letter to the Romans Chapters 8: 28-30; 9: 11-24, unless one is more than ordinarily careful to examine other passages before coming to a fixed conclusion, the conclusion arrived at by Calvin and his coadjutors is likely to appear reasonable. When a conclusion is once reached by a particularly strong minded individual—right or wrong—it is

not so easily shaken. No matter however strong adverse declarations may make their claim, they go like the horsemen sent by Joram to Jehu to inquire if there were peace; Jehu said: "What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me"—the men sent became a part of Jehu's army. When conclusions are arrived at (reasonable or unreasonable) the strongest controversial points become evidence of former conclusions. When the mind is once fixed, other passages which otherwise would establish the reverse, strengthen the mistaken idea.

It can be seen, if one will allow his prejudice to lift the veil, that in every place where predestination is mentioned, the divine index finger points to Christ, and generally continues throughout the declaration.

One of the strongest passages establishing the doctrine of predestination is, Romans 8: 29, and it reads: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Here it is positively declared that according to the divine knowledge (of those who would yield to the overtures of salvation) He fore-arranged their place, "To be conformed to the image of His Son"; and gave as His rea-

son, that Christ "might be the firstborn among many brethren." As He has declared, there is no other way out of the painful dilemma to reach the desired place of happiness than to be conformed to the image (once lost) of His Son.

But Paul's letter to the Ephesians is far more explicit and pointed in this direction. The apostle says—Chapter 1: 5-13—"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who *first trusted in Christ.*

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: *in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.*"

These declarations, to us, seem so plain they need no comment nor explanation; yet there are those who are rather slow to see even things which are plain and clear, especially if their minds have been trained to see things differently.

The leading verse (5th) of our present quotation states positively that Christ is the predestinated source of salvation. Says the apostle: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children *by Jesus Christ to himself*, according to the good pleasure of his will"; and in the following verse he declares that this was done to the praise of the glory of His grace, "wherein he hath made us accepted *in the beloved.*"

The apostle makes it yet plainer, says: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself." Here it may be noticed *predestinate* and *purpose*, applying to God, are synonymous. Predestination is a purpose unchanged, and can be appropriately applied to God only. Purpose may be applied to man. A man may have a purpose which he may not be

able to carry into effect, but God's purposes all go into effect. This, therefore, makes *predestine*, *foreordain*, and *purpose* synonymous terms, when applied to God. It is not hard to comprehend the fact that God's purposes are done when they become His purposes.

In the passage just quoted, the apostle declares that Jesus Christ made known to us the mystery of His will; that is, of His foreordained plan, according to His good pleasure, "Which he hath purposed" (or predestinated) "in himself." The apostle continues: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who *first trusted in Christ*." But the apostle does not seem to consider himself tautological in his expression, continuing his argument, says: "In whom we also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:" and to make double sure his intention, repeats: "*In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise*." We are sure if any one fails to see the apostle's point, it is not because he has not made every effort to make himself clearly and

positively understood—his often repetition bears him witness. The apostle wants us to know that God's determination was to reveal to us that Jesus Christ was not merely the foreordained medium, but the only and eternal Source of salvation; and he brought it out more clearly (if possible) in his epistle to the Ephesians—Chapter 3: verse 9-11—"To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

There can be no doubt in the latter quotation, the apostle dwelt chiefly on the design of Providence in revealing to the church, what was formerly kept a mystery. May we ask reverently, What good could be the result of a revelation to us or to the church, in any special effort to reveal the fact which contained the determined plan of God in saving a part of mankind and sinking the remainder into utter destruction? Since the destiny of no one could be changed by this information, what good could be the result

in saying to the church, say to men: A large number of you have been cursed from the foundation of the world, and the remainder blessed with salvation: nothing you can do will change the decree? does that seem to be an exhibition of the wisdom of God? would not such a revelation cause any reasonable person to submit to the inevitable without reverential fear?—God has cursed me without any fault of my own: I suppose it will be all right. To us such a doctrine seems inconsistent when it is applied to human judgment, not to mention divine equity.

Paul wants it to be known in the church, that from eternity, Jesus Christ is the destined center of salvation. That He is the Door, the only Door; and through Him alone salvation may be obtained. The apostle desired the church to know the manifold wisdom of God in centralizing the salvation of man in Christ Jesus the Lord; and it was to be known that He purposed in Himself—in God—that all things were created in Christ Jesus, and that though the enemy had made an effort to destroy the plan, salvation shall be through no other; and so the carrying out of the plan of the divine counsel shall be without variation. That all individuals shall see what was formerly a mystery, even in heav-

en, revealed to the church, that the fellowship of man with God shall be through Jesus Christ: beside Him there is no other. And Christ Himself declares—John 14: 6—“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Paul writing to the Corinthian church, handed to us this information—I. Corinthians 2: 6-8—“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the prince of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

In the foregoing quotation, the apostle declares that Jesus Christ was the foreordained medium of the plan of salvation, and that He was a mystery hidden in wisdom; that He was hidden from the princes of this world; they did not know it, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Any individual who reads carefully and inquiringly will easily discover the fact that Jesus Christ was ordained (predestinated if you like) in the counsel of divine wisdom as the medium of salvation.

The apostle writing to the Ephesians, presents Christ as the mystery of hidden wisdom ordained from eternity as the great center of salvation—Chapter 3: 9-11, and gave guaranteed information to the church at Corinth as is found in I. Corinthians 2: 6-8.

CHRIST THE CENTRAL POINT.

The one thing the apostle seemed intent upon establishing was, the one and only Medium of salvation. He knew the diversity of minds of individuals who had been heathen. In their polytheistic views, how they might easily account for distributive influences, and so distribute their honor and worship to gods of the hills and of the valleys, gods of water and fire, according to custom. He uses all exactness possible, giving line upon line, line upon line; precept upon precept, precept upon precept, to convey the clear evidence of the doctrine he preached in relation to man's salvation. He showed that it was not an after thought put forth to meet the emergency brought about by the fall of man—a strange coincidence—but that it was the plan ordained of God from eternity. The plan was ordained to meet every emergency, but it was not revealed, not even to angels, though sought by them. On

this line Peter says:—I. Peter 1: 8-12—"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

It seems to be the desire of the Apostle Paul, and other writers of the New Testament, that the things which had been kept a mystery for ages, not merely should be revealed, but he desired to make the revelation clear and pointed; he speaks, therefore, of it as the eternal plan, foreordained of God in His eternal counsel. It follows as a sequence, that as no house is built without looking toward inhabitants, prepara-

tion for salvation would scarcely be made without taking into consideration *those for whom the preparation was being made.*

The all-seeing eye beholding from eternity all things as they really would exist—with Him existed—settles down on Christ as the only Door—nothing to God being impenetrable—it would be impossible for Him to take no notice of those whom He sees walking in the path provided by divine wisdom, leading from death to life eternal. The individuals in whom He had special interest, those for whom His only begotten Son would die—died!

As it was only natural, God saw (sees) them, and He registered those who would accept (accepted) Heaven's plan of salvation. He kept the plan and its workings in the bosom of the Trinity, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of time he might gather together in one all things in Christ"; He revealed them to the church. In His revelation He made known that from eternity He had placed His seal upon One mighty to save, and sealed those who yielded to His divine wooings.

Of this determination of God, Paul said—Romans 8: 29—"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the im-

age of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren"; and in his letter to his Ephesian brethren, he said—Ephesians 1: 5—"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." These expressions clearly demonstrate the mysterious plan of the Father, made to the church, as though He declares: I set my seal upon my Son, to be the eternal and only Source of salvation, and upon those (I know them) who accept His offered mercies.

THE WORK OF ETERNAL WISDOM.

We can not help knowing that none of the workings of Providence are without reason and purpose, for God is the source of reason, having all things in His immediate presence at all times—with Him an eternal now—with Almighty power and wisdom to construct and guide, constructing and guiding, it is utterly impossible for any difficulty to arise where there is no provision made to counteract the adverse current, when His will is manifested.

God has given practical illustration in the varied walks of life, that no matter what plan the enemy may adopt, God is eternally ahead, and

can not otherwise than be ahead; whether it be in the birth of Jesus Christ in the manger at Bethlehem, issuing blood from His side on the cross of Calvary, in the agony of death, or passing through the clouds ascending to the throne of glory—God has always left His enemies behind, and His friends shall share His triumphs.

He has shown this in innumerable cases. Take for instance the varied life of the patriarch Joseph, son of Jacob. Joseph had his difficulties. They were not few, and some seemed insurmountable, but he trusted in God always; and while once he was at the mercy of his brothers, then in the Egyptian prison house, at last he is found sitting in the second chariot and ruling the kingdom of Egypt.

In some cases it is God's eternal will that it must be; then, there is nothing to obstruct His *will*. Again, it is His will, if it be your will, it shall be done. So it may be observed, there are different phases of His will, and they are separate and distinct—they are often confounded by men.

In the case of His will, as it must be, we have in the gospel expressions thereof in its unchangeable nature. As for example—John 17: 24—"Father I will that they also whom thou hast

given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." There is naught to change this phase of the fulfillment of His will—it must be done. Then, there is another phase of His will which may be seen in Matthew 11: 28: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." A similar expression of His will may be seen in Matthew 10: 32—"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven." In the latter quotations it may be seen that God connects His will with that of His creatures thus: I will give you rest, if you come to me; I will confess you before my Father which is in heaven, providing you confess me before men.

This is reasonable. God's will is evidently for every good and laudable work, and He has the unlimited power to carry His will into effect, but if men are moral beings (and they are) they must be given a chance to exercise the power of their will, or not held responsible for its untoward exercise. That this moral being may be responsible for his acts, God does not control his will; therefore He says: I will, and if thou wilt, I will carry out my will.

MAN AND GOD SEPARATE AND DISTINCT.

In giving Scriptural evidences that Christ is the predestinated Source of salvation, it is not our mind or intention to invalidate the fact, that predestination points to man—his destiny. What we desire to exhibit is, the Scriptural fact that the revelation of the mystery of salvation was intended to hold to the gaze of the fallen race of mankind, the only Medium of salvation; and in so doing, pointed to the divine confirmation of the saved in the same utterance; yet they are to be understood separately and distinctly.

It has been the wisdom of God, never to mingle the acts of man with those of his Creator, for good reason; and in revelation they never will be seen operating jointly; probably for the reason that misconstruction and misunderstanding are likely to disconcert intended plans. In the case of predestination we have an example.

The apostle began by saying: "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate"; and that expression made a deeper impression upon the minds of individuals than that which gloriously followed—"To be conformed to the image of his Son"; and the excellent reason, "That he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Yet one

can see that the utterance of the latter is so much more glorious than the former. Failing to recognize that fact, seems to be the loose screw which threw men from the track, and many seem to remain off.

The same may be seen in the expression of the apostle to the Ephesian Church. "Having predestinated us", seems to call forth so much more attention than the information which follows that we can but wonder at going in a direction so different from that intended—"Adoption of children of Jesus Christ to himself"; that is, adopting us as children by Jesus Christ to Himself, and then comes the expression of His tender and merciful reason: "According to the good pleasure of his will." It is Jesus Christ to whom God wants us to look, but looking so steadfastly on ourselves, instead of Christ, we see the act of God in an untoward light. If we looked more steadfastly upon Him who adopted us into His family, and saw in Him the worthy cleft of a rock—"Cleft for us"—we would be enabled to understand more clearly that He uses His good pleasure to save every individual who can be saved legally. That is to say, any individual who can be saved according to means which may be used in deference to justice. Justice makes his de-

mands—he is one of the attributes of God—and must be heard when his case is favorable; but Jesus Christ often takes from his clutches (justice,) the condemned, through His (Christ's) pleadings. This is chiefly what the apostle wants us to know.

Let us look more carefully at the utterance of the apostle, in relation to predestination, as it applies, first to Jesus Christ as the eternal and only Source of salvation, so ordained of God; then, to those who are sealed in accordance with the knowledge of God. We think, then, the subject will appear differently.

That the Principal appears second in the expression, no doubt, may have caused some to look upon Him secondarily, but the reason for the place He occupies is suggestive, and may be noticed in each of the principal expressions, in the apostle's letter touching predestination. One is, "That he might be the firstborn among many brethren"; and the other: "According to the good pleasure of his will." These adjuncts could be more easily applied to Christ if they followed Him directly.

Looking at Jesus Christ as the Principal, the Source of predestination—and that is true, for so the Scripture presents Him—we see more clearly

the truth uttered by the apostle—man predestinated from eternity.

Is it not very strange that we should overlook the leading word in the first sentence of the apostle on the subject of predestination, “foreknow”? It is true, as we have said, literally God does not foreknow anything, for all things are before Him on all occasions. We were going to say at all times, but with Him there is no time—time is applied to mortals.

Predestinarians, of the Calvinistic school, tell us positively, that in predestination God did according to His will, without reference to His knowledge of what would or would not occur. Paul tells us, that those who were sealed were confirmed because of God’s knowledge of them: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate.” We can not see how that declaration could be more plainly expressed in Scripture. Any reasonable individual would interpret it: I know these and am settled in the place of their destiny. I have purposed that Jesus Christ is the only Source of salvation, and have directed all possible influence about them to draw them to the only Source of salvation. A will yield to the overtures of mercy, B will not. I have settled the places of their destinies. A accepting the

atonement of the Anointed, is assigned to the realms of light; B refusing acceptance, is eternally lost. This is done from perfect knowledge: from eternity to eternity—an eternal now. “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate.” But this is secondary. The primary is, the revelation of Christ the Saviour of the world—the only Saviour. Jesus turns away none who is willing to go to the Father through Him.

CONCLUSION.

One of the greatest mistakes in life has been and is, man has been inclined to look more to himself than to the Lord Jesus Christ; and in such cases, if he has not utterly failed, he has in turn numerous cross providences.

We believe in the Christ and His power and will to save, but we lack finished confidence in His mercies coupled with His equity. When we hear of the doings of the court of so-called justice, we readily agree that prisoners should have the benefit of all doubts, but rarely look at the fact that so anxious is Christ to save the purchase of His blood, that he allows individuals the benefit of every reasonable plea. The dying thief on the cross is an evidence of this statement: “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy king-

dom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Christ saves to the uttermost all that come to God through Him. It is not agreeable to nor in accordance with the nature of His saving power, to create a part of mankind for eternal punishment. How then could it be said, He saves to the uttermost? yet this is true: "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7: 25.

Knowing our sincere intention, may the Divine Spirit impress the truth, and make less conspicuous any error herein expressed.

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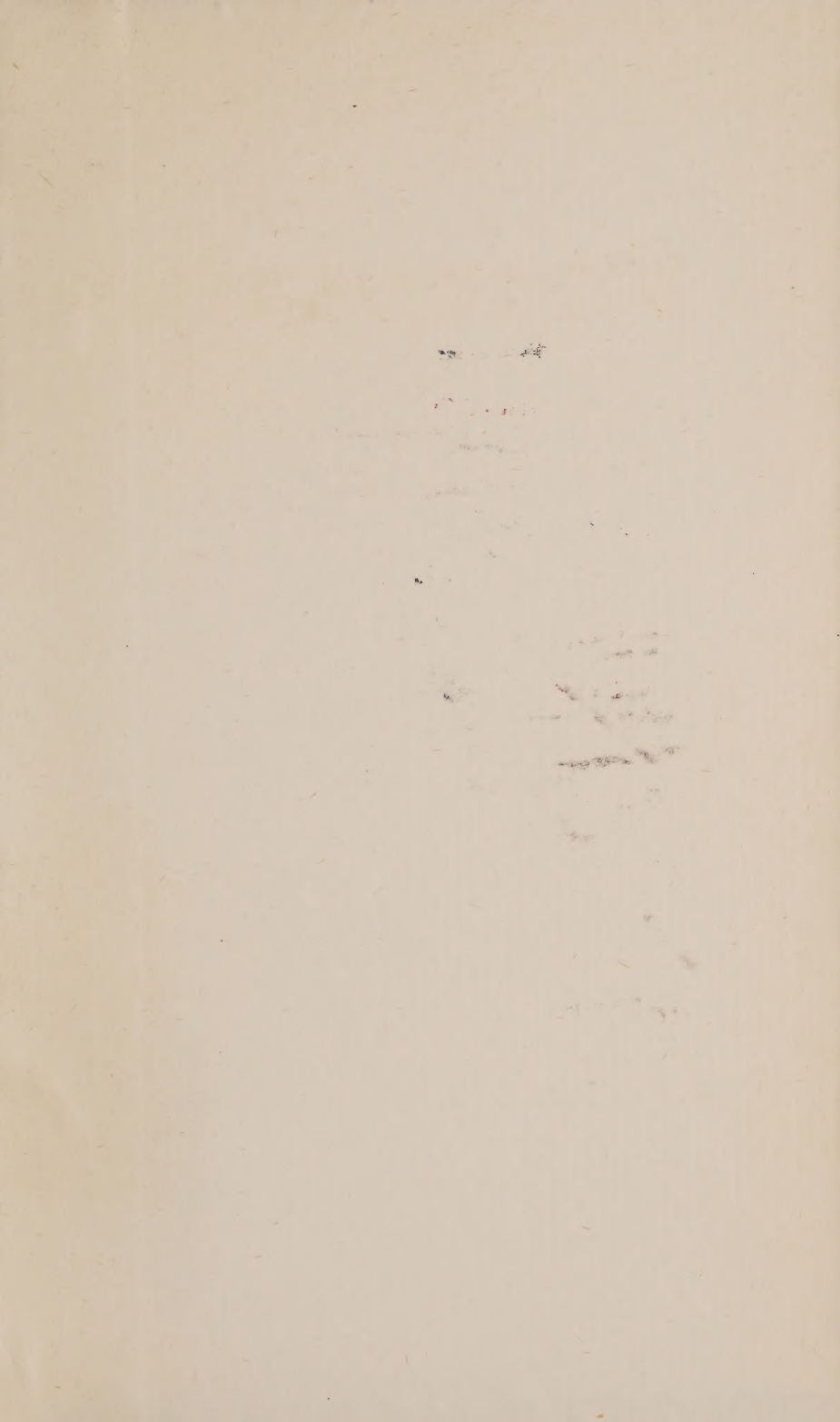
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